

DOES CULTURE MATTER?
UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THE WRITING OF
FIRST TO THIRD GENERATION MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN A
TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE PROGRAM

A Dissertation

by

LIZ ANN BÁEZ AGUILAR

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

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ABSTRACT

Does Culture Matter?

Understanding Cultural Representation in the Writing of First to Third Generation
Mexican American Students in a Transitional High School to College Program.

(August 2010)

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This doctoral dissertation intends to contribute to an understanding of the experiences of Mexican American students in a high school to college transitional program and how their culture influences their writing. The transitional program used for the study was located at a community college in the Southwest. This qualitative study incorporated the research instruments of interviews and writing samples using discourse analysis. From the results of this study, several themes emerged and demonstrated how both cultural and social capital are significant in these students' experiences as they participate in the transitional high school to college program. Research has asserted the high rates of Mexican American students dropping out of school and not completing higher education. This study will enable us to help reduce the current rate of attrition and help students complete their higher education. This study's findings have implications

for the field of adult education because they provide a lens to understand the importance of cultural and social capital as they relate to adult students learning in the classroom.

DEDICATION

*To my Adonai, my God,
for having granted me a childhood dream*

*To my mother, Enriqueta, and father, Valentin,
my sister, Yamin Saira, and brother, Moses*

with endless gratitude for your love, prayers, and encouragement during all of my years of study. Thank you for the great wisdom and spiritual guidance that you have given me and most of all, for being there during this very special part of my journey in life.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11

“Porque yo se los caminos que tengo acerca de vosotros,” dice Jehova, “pensamientos de paz, y no de mal, para daros el fin que esperais.”
Jeremías 29:11

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

During the past 20 years, the United States has witnessed an influx of Latino immigrants similar to the surge of Eastern Europeans who immigrated over 100 years ago through Ellis Island. Among Latinos, current immigration is from Mexico, Central and South America, and from Caribbean countries. Recent reports from the U.S. Census demonstrate the continuous growth of individuals from Hispanic countries (A Generation Away, 2008). Latinos will continue to dominate the increase of the U.S. population not only because of continuing immigration, both documented and undocumented, but also because of the youth of the Latino group (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), there has been an increase in population growth of 57.9% from years, 1990-2000. The number of Latinos identified by the Census has grown to a record of 35,305,818 and those of Mexican origin, the largest national origin group of Latinos, number 20,640,711 which is 58.5% of the total Latino population in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Ream (2005) discussed the increase of Latinos and the effect that increasing numbers of Latinos will have on schools within the next 25 years. Although the population growth of Latinos has increased, the retention level of Latinos completing

This dissertation follows the style of *Adult Education Quarterly*.

four years of education in high school remains low (Llagas, 2003).

As a result, several of the programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education are attempting to understand and eventually eliminate the high dropout rate of Latinos in school. According to Brooks (2008), the U.S. needs to focus its attention on educating its population because since the 1970s, it has fallen behind other nations in successfully educating its youth. Research on educational attainment of Mexican Americans is a timely issue because Latinos, as a part of the general youth population, are at greater risk of dropping out of high school and, if attending college, of not graduating, than other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.

Since Latinos comprise the single largest minority group in the U.S. at this time, there is a need to focus our attention on this student population to ensure their retention in formal education. As Torres (2004) states, “While many in society would consider graduation from high school to be a minimal educational attainment in today’s society, there continues to be a large gap between Latinos and non-Latino whites with regard to completion of high school” (p.10).

Because there is a disparity in educational attainment between Latino youth and other groups, it is imperative that there be an effective change in our current educational system. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identified the total enrollment rates for 18-24 year olds in colleges and universities for Latinos to be 22%, compared to 31% for African Americans (Llagas, 2003). Challenges affecting Latino youth and reflected in their excessive dropout rates need to be addressed. It is apparent

that Latinos need the resources and knowledge necessary for the successful transition from secondary school to the college and university level.

Statement of the Problem

On March 10, 2009, President Obama spoke on educational policy in the U.S. (Martin, 2009). He indicated that he would continue endorsing the “No Child Left Behind” program for the improvement of student achievement (Martin, 2009, 6A). Amidst government support to improve the educational system, there is still a large gap to be filled with educational achievement for minority students, particularly those of Mexican American descent. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2008), “between October 2005 and October 2006, Hispanic students in public and private high schools were more likely to drop out than were white and black students” (Laird, p. 4). Both cultural and social capital aid in addressing why Mexican American students’ educational achievement falls short to their counterparts. To be successful in college, Latino students need sufficient cultural capital. Cultural capital according to Pierre Bourdieu (1973), is representative in an embodied, objectified, and institutionalized state (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98).

Cultural capital is the acquisition of resources that initially is provided by a person’s family, and as an individual matures, there is a continuous acquisition of additional resources that can continue to increase and provide a better life environment for an individual. In addition to cultural capital, there is social capital, the ability to network with others and attain benefits through this type of networking. One example of social capital is networking done in various corporate job environments. This type of

networking establishes contacts for individuals within different areas of business, banking, and community organizations.

According to González, Stone, and Jovel (2003), there are primary and secondary schools that do provide the opportunity for students to acquire the social capital necessary for college, but there can also be schools where students receive neglect and discouragement (p. 153). According to González et al. (2003), some schools will not provide students with necessary information to move forward with their education, and instead create a negative, unwelcoming, environment. Many counselors avoid explaining college/university material because they feel that the students have only a minimal chance of succeeding in college, and they would much rather provide academically prepared students with information about college. This continues a vicious cycle of inequality that impacts heavily on students of color and on students in families of low socioeconomic status.

Latinos have the lowest percentages of college attainment, college enrollment, and college completion relative to other racial and ethnic groups, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (Laird, 2006 & 2008). To help reduce the dropout rate of Latinos in high school and college, some colleges are implementing programs to assist with their transition to college. Transitional programs are meant to help students answer questions about their future college experience, often specifically focusing on the application process and the transition from high school to college. According to Reyes (2007), a student support program called:

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) is a federally funded

scholarship program that is designed to provide opportunities for students from migrant, agricultural, and/or lower income families to attend college. It offers first-year college support in the form of tuition assistance, funds for books, a monthly stipend, and a curriculum and program design that offers a community of academic and personal support by all those involved with the program.

(p. 627)

Programs such as this one have been established in colleges and universities across the United States. Some of these programs, as mentioned, focus their attention to student orientation and visits to campus while students are enrolled in high school. Although many of these programs exist, what has been left out in research on the Latino drop out challenge is the role of culture and its effect in a transitional program, and how culture influences the writing of Mexican American students. Clearly, our cultures and histories influence our writing and experiences, and it is important to understand how Mexican American students are influenced by their culture and history through their writing in an effort to help them succeed, given the demands of academic writing in college. Writing is crucial to achieving academic success. Much of college and university coursework requires a writing component, whether it is in the form of a journal, an academic research paper, an annotated bibliography, or a written laboratory or business report. These assignments require writing skill proficiency in order to fulfill the demands of course requirements.

In the fall of 2009, at a community college in the Southwest, there were 1,598 or 43.5% Hispanic students who took Freshman Composition I compared to 1,753 or

47.7% of White/Non-Hispanic students. Of the 1,598 Hispanic students who took Freshman Composition I, 193 or 12.1% reported a grade of a failure in the course in comparison to 133 or 7.6% of White/Non-Hispanic students. Of the 354 students who failed Freshman Composition I in the fall of 2009, Hispanic students comprised the second highest percentage at 12.1% only slightly less than the 15.8% of students from American Indian/Alaskan native descent (Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, 2010). Although this is only one statistic from one college, it does demonstrate the problem that composition represents to many Latino students. The scholarly literature to date has not focused on the influence of culture and its connection to writing within a transitional high school to college program.

Thus, this study has two primary foci: (a) the transitional experience of Mexican American students in the Institute of Student Success (IOSS), a pseudonym, a transitional high school to college program, at a community college and (b) Mexican American students' cultural influences on their writing. The hope is that the empirically supported findings in this study will help diminish the attrition of first to third generation Mexican American students in college and at the university level.

Purpose of Study

There is minimal information that explains what Latino participants of transitional programs are experiencing and how these programs benefit their transition into college and, similarly, there is also a lack of understanding of how the writing of Latino students is influenced by their culture. Thus, the purpose of the study was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceive their transition

into college and it will also help to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture has on their writing. The Institute of Student Success (IOSS), a transitional high school to college program, located at a community college in the Southwest has progressively increased enrollment and retention rates of participants who have continued their studies. Since students in the IOSS need to improve their writing skills, this dissertation is focused on how Mexican American college students connect their culture to their writing. This doctoral dissertation examines a program established to assist Latinos in their transition from high school to college in a major city in the Southwestern part of the United States with a large Latino, mostly Mexican origin, population.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is drawn from the studies on cultural and social capital. I have chosen to include both of these types of capital because both are connected to students' transitions from high school into college. Social capital will help illuminate the importance of networks and social resources and cultural capital will help foster academic success since Mexican American students are among the most likely students in higher education to drop out of school.

Cultural capital as defined by Pierre Bourdieu:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, that is, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a

form of objectification that must be set apart. (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98)

Cultural capital is important to understanding how prepared are first to third generation Mexican American students as they transition into college. It is important to understand what type of cultural capital was provided to them by their families and schooling prior to coming to a higher education environment. By understanding these components, one is able to help the student attain a much easier transition into the college or university environment. The factors that inhibit a student from continuing their education must be addressed and the inclusion of cultural and social capital to help student attrition and to offer some benefits for providing a better transitional experience for the student must be attained.

By providing additional cultural capital and social capital to Mexican American first generation college students, the attrition and degree completion rates will lower and students will have a more successful academic experience. Social capital is defined by Pierre Bourdieu as “....the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98).

Social capital is important to understanding what types of networking have the students acquired prior to entering their college or university environment. A student is provided with some necessary resources prior to entering higher education such as high school counselors and some college on-campus visits, but many students lack the social capital

that can help direct them to the individuals or programs that will help benefit their academic experience.

The concepts of cultural and social capital will help us understand why Mexican American students sometimes are underprepared and do not do well as they initiate their first semester in college. They also provide insight as to what can be done to improve the success of Mexican American students in college.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing. The following research questions will guide the study:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?
3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

Significance of Study

Given the low rate of educational attainment among Mexican Americans this study has taken two primary foci: (a) the transitional experience of Mexican American students in the IOSS program and (b) Mexican American students and writing and its application to a conceptual framework of cultural and social capital. The significance of

this study will apply to theory/research, policy, and practice, the goal of which will be to increase the educational attainment of Mexican Americans.

Theory/Research

This study may provide much needed analyses of the value of transitional programs relative to Mexican American college students. In particular, this study focused on Mexican origin students' transition to college, students who are at risk of not receiving college degrees. A review of the literature found that, as of now, there has been no study of a transitional program of students of Mexican origin with a focus on how their culture influences their writing in composition courses. Other studies of high school to college programs have analyzed student orientation, student development courses, and first year in college experiences more generally. Reyes (2007) described the importance of the learning experience for the student of Mexican descent and his study evaluated the experiences of five students who participated in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). His study's focus used the "term situational marginalization to highlight what is occurring to particular subpopulations of students of Mexican descent" (p. 622). In the study, Reyes (2007) described the stereotypes associated with students of Mexican descent who are often separated from other students because of their ethnicity and economic status. The study sought to look at the perceptions of student participants in the program and their reflections on their experience. The study used narrative inquiry and interviews, field notes, and some writing samples. With purposive sampling, the study selected students of Mexican descent who were willing to participate in the study for one year. Reyes (2007) mentioned that all of the students

were successful in the program because they acquired additional knowledge about college and this information, then, would help them continue with their college studies. The results of the study concluded that “schools need to look more closely at who is defining what college material is [used among] in culturally and linguistically diverse students, especially those coming from situationally marginalized backgrounds” (p. 652).

Consequently, this study intends to contribute to an understanding as to how cultural and social capital theories can be applied to ethnicity, teaching, and to transitional programs. This study may also encourage further studies of the larger Latino population including students from other Latino nationalities.

Policy

Students in the IOSS at a college in the Southwest belong to a particular ethnic group; the IOSS is geared toward Mexican American students enrolled in the program. Given the relatively low income of many of its participants, the program offers financial aid, and if students do not qualify for a US Government Pell grant, they are offered a scholarship. The program’s intent is to create an effective transition into the college environment; through the “Strategies for Success” class, the student is offered workshops on note-taking, test-taking, time management, etc. By establishing all of these resources as well as by establishing a cohort effect where students do not feel as if they are attending college alone, students are given a better chance to transition effectively into a college environment in the fall semester after graduating from high school. An analysis of this program holds promise, then, for a more complete

understanding of the support necessary for a successful transition from high school to college for Mexican American students.

In addition, to the extent that the transitional program under study is deemed successful, other institutions of higher learning may be influenced to develop similar programs with the potential of increasing admission and retention of Mexican American students in college. The implementation of these programs, not only in the state of Texas but also across the U.S., could aid in improving dropout rates in one of the fastest growing populations in the nation. Since the number of Latinos in the U.S. continues to increase, it is important to the future of the nation that this population also increases its success in higher education. It is hoped that Mexican American students who achieve higher education will become involved in educational reform and will provide the necessary political strength needed to assist this segment of the population.

Practice

Findings from this research may provide writing instructors of first generation college Latinos with information as to how to improve their writing classes in the future. Understanding the writing processes of Mexican American first generation college students may have the effect not only of helping the writing instructor reach out to Mexican American students, but also of demonstrating to instructors the value of culture as an effective writing tool. The study also intends to contribute to pedagogy and practice in that teachers of writing may be able to develop assignments that could assist the transition of students by means of personal reflective writing as well as other types of writing in an academic environment.

In addition, this study may provide insight for teachers in understanding the connection between the culture of Mexican American students and their learning. It may enable instructors of composition in colleges and universities to better understand relationships between student background and student success in academia.

Definition of Terms

Accuplacer Test -This placement exam is administered to all entering freshman college students in the state of Texas. The exam is sectioned into three parts: reading, math, and English. The English portion of the exam consists of a multiple choice section and a timed, 90 minute, essay of 500 -700 words. The remaining portions of the examination are untimed.

Cultural Capital - Pierre Bourdieu defined cultural capital as representative:

in the embodied state, that is, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification that must be set apart.
(Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98)

For this study, it is defined as that acquisition of information that will assist students to do well in school.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - This is an application available for students interested in receiving federal aid from the U.S. Government. The applications are accessible via the Internet and are housed under the auspices of the Office of Federal Student Aid in the U.S. Department of Education.

Gee's Narrative Analysis –A method of discourse analysis and developed by James Paul Gee in an effort to understand the meaning of the text through a re-writing of the text and through deconstructing the text's meaning.

Institute of Student Success (IOSS) -This is a pseudonym for a transitional high school to college program in a community college in the Southwest.

Social Capital –This is a term developed by James Coleman in the 1980's and it is associated with networking with individuals who can enable one to advance in various areas including schooling. It was also defined by Pierre Bourdieu as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition-or in other words, to membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' that entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word.

(Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98)

Limitations

This study was limited by the small number in the final sample in this research. Because of the limited number of participants, this researcher was able to have only one third generation student participate in this study. As a result, no third generation comparison could be made among individuals.

Delimitations

This study is about one group of Latino youth in one transitional program and may not have relevance to all Latino youth of other ethnicities or to all Mexican youth.

Summary

To summarize, the content of the work in Chapter I described the background of the problem related to the attrition rate of Latinos transitioning into their first year of college. This chapter also discussed the purpose and conceptual framework for the study and concluded with a statement about the significance of this work.

Chapter II will review the literature of cultural and social capital and the four areas pertaining to this study: (a) Latino Students and Higher Education, (b) Students' Experiences with Transition and Influential Factors (c) Types of Transitional Programs, and (d) Study of Composition and its Relation to Latino Students. Chapter III will discuss the basic interpretive qualitative framework to be used for this study. In addition a methodological explanation, the role of the researcher, the site and participant selection in the study will also be addressed.

In Chapter IV, the findings of the study will be categorized thematically to address the research questions asked, and discussed in detail. Finally, Chapter V will conclude with a discussion of this study's policy recommendations derived from the analyses.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter I presented the purpose of the study, which was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?
3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

As previously introduced in Chapter I, this study's conceptual framework was taken from the literature on cultural and social capital. Both capitals are influential in understanding how Mexican American college students come prepared or underprepared into their first semester in a college environment. The beginning of this review of literature will focus on the literature on cultural and social capital followed by the four major areas related to this study: (a) Latino Students and Higher Education, (b) Students' Experiences with Transition and Influential Factors (c) Types of Transitional Programs, and (d) Study of Composition and its Relation to Latino Students.

The apparent high levels of Mexican American students not completing a college degree and dropping out of college/university needs to be addressed and this first section will concentrate on previous research on Latinos and higher education. I chose to focus my attention on the research that was focused on Latinos and their connection to higher education since my study focused on the connection of Mexican American students and their college experience.

The second part of the review of literature will address previous studies on the transition from high school to college and factors that contribute both to positive and to negative outcomes. This section focused on the experiences that students encounter upon their transition from high school to college.

The third section of the review of literature will examine student needs in a college environment and, if needs are not met, student attrition from college. This section will also explore transitional programs developed through various initiatives. This area addressed what students confronted and how prepared and/or underprepared these students were as they entered college. Also in this section, the various types of transitional programs will be presented.

The fourth and final section of the review of literature will review trends in composition, and focus on studies of Latino students and writing. I chose to review the history of writing research and review the limited number of research that focused on Latino students and its connection to writing.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital, as used in this study, can be defined as background provided by family that enables students to do well in school. Bourdieu's (1973) *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction* elaborated on this concept. He expanded the concept of capital as used in economics as wealth capable of producing additional wealth to the concept of cultural capital as family resources capable of assisting those born into families with abundant resources to do well in school. Additionally, individuals in elite social classes possess inordinate amounts of influence and power, enabling them to create a form of social exclusion that separates them from all other social classes (Levitas, 2004). With this exclusion, a new type of environment is formed and recognition is made of elite individuals (Moore, 2004).

Thus, a person is born with a certain degree of cultural capital which is provided by the parents and as the individual continues to grow into adulthood, the cultural capital continues to increase and the individual is able to use this acquired cultural capital and apply it to their environment on a continuum. Social capital is another form of capital "which is often viewed as a determinant of an individual's economic growth and as a contributor to the well-being of communities and nations" (Alfred, 2009, p.3). Cultural capital can be applied to this study in understanding how prepared or underprepared students are as they enter their first semester in college and this information was collected through the students' perspective of their experiences. Social capital can also be applied to the study because it can identify if the Mexican American students are

knowledgeable of social capital as they work through their first semester of college.

Both cultural and social capital will be used for this study and its development.

Bourdieu emphasized the disparity that exists between upper and lower classes. As mentioned, he believed that cultural capital resided in the home and that by the time children were integrated into school, the division of classes created an inequality in children's education because of a "value-laden" system that favored elites (Dumais, 2005, p.85). "Instead of rewarding and promoting students only according to their ability, schools and teachers are biased in favor of students who possess cultural capital—that is students from the upper classes" (Dumais, 2005, p.85). Scholars both in education and in sociology have used and applied Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to understand the persistence of social inequality in society.

Cultural Capital and Schooling

Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1973), can be applied to evaluate inequalities among social class levels (Wacquant, 2002). When applying cultural capital in the context of education acquisition, cultural capital is reproduced in the wealthy and is not at a high level among the uneducated and poor because their families lack the resources to guide and prepare their children for a positive educational experience. Persons born into wealthy families, according to Bourdieu, will have greater opportunities for cultural immersion into a learned knowledge base. "Students from more privileged backgrounds have a habitus that matches with the values of the school and teachers. These students are therefore more comfortable interacting with teachers than lower SES students, and the teachers see these students as more motivated than

their lower SES peers” (Dumais, 2005, p. 86). To summarize, using Bourdieu’s model, cultural capital resides in families, and if a given family’s cultural capital is substantial, children born into that family have a greater opportunity to do better in their schooling and in middle and upper class social surroundings than children born into families with less cultural capital (Murguia, 1995).

Trueba (2002) redefined cultural capital in an interesting way. He indicated that Latinos have an opportunity to acquire a “new cultural capital,” namely that capital that helps a person succeed amidst adversity. Dual identity, bilingualism, and hard work are all characteristics of Latino immigrants who struggle but who do have some success in the US, their country of destination. The ability to endure assists Latinos to continue to strive. “Habitus,” as defined by Trueba includes those characteristics that help individuals relate to their social environment. Habitus is incorporated in a person’s development, and it includes familial values and norms that are taught by the person’s family, as well as knowledge acquired in school. Studies have shown that there is a distinct correlation between academic achievement and a student’s upbringing (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999).

Families of higher socio-economic status (SES) than in those in a lower SES level will be able to acquire more cultural capital because they will be able to pay for other types of programs which will strengthen their educational experience. This advantage helps students from affluent families to perform better in school not only because they do well academically, but also because they are able to participate in additional programs and extra-curricular activities (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell,

1999). This reflects Bourdieu's (1973) perspective of cultural capital as instrumental in providing advantage to those in higher positions whereas those in lower positions will remain oppressed. According to Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell (1999), "Gatekeepers (teachers) may play a role in rewarding affluent students with high-brow [elite] cultural capital....with more attention, assistance, and [with higher] expectations" (p. 161).

Kosut (2006) described the inequalities she experienced in her own academic experience. She viewed the distinct divisions between individuals who have been given an opportunity to learn and those who have not. She used her life as an ethnographic study by discussing the difficulties that she encountered while pursuing her doctorate. Because of her "blue-collar" background, she reflected on the social distance encountered with her peers and professors. Kosut noted that she felt "detached" from her "familial roots," and, in the process of obtaining her degree, found herself creating a separation between her family life and her scholarly life.

In the world of academia, she had difficulty connecting with her peers because the majority of them had grown up with appropriate amounts of resources that facilitated their transition to higher education. She also stated that she tried to hide her identity in order to gain "acceptance and credibility as a student scholar and eventually a professor" (Kosut, 2006, p. 248). Moreover, she also alluded to not fitting into the world of academia by asserting that "professorial capital" includes "discursive, aesthetic cultural, cognitive, and temporal" traits that are reflective in the "upper tiers of the academy" (Kosut, 2006, p. 248) and that these qualities, in essence, reflect the privileged and elite class.

Naidoo (2004) explored the relationship between higher education and the inequality that exists in higher education. This study was built on Bourdieu's analytical framework in an effort to understand how South African universities applied levels of class and society within the years of 1985-1990. Naidoo (2004) analyzed two case studies at two universities: Mount Pleasant University and Freedom University. In this study, Naidoo (2004) described the selection process that took place at the university level, which included selecting students based on their social class level. In her study, the admissions process was reviewed and identified to demonstrate inequalities by social class and by race (Naidoo, 2004). "The admissions policies of Mount Pleasant University, which admitted mainly white students from dominant positions in society, while largely excluding African students" is an example of the exclusion that exists at this higher level of education (Naidoo, 2004, p. 466). Naidoo (2004) argued that by largely accepting white, upper-class students into higher education, the university was promoting and producing more of the same types of students in the future. This idea reinforced Bourdieu's "insight that the field of higher education is not a product of consensus but the product of a permanent conflict" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 469).

Modood (2004) emphasized the idea that some minorities were able to adjust to the dominant white culture in an effort to gain acceptance into higher education, and in this manner acquired additional cultural capital in order to be accepted to the same degree as their white counterparts. Yet this type of assimilation created a problem. Their identity, because of their desire to ignore their identity of origin as a means of

“upward mobility” (Modood, 2004, p.97), sometimes alienated them from their family of origin.

Moore (2004) argued that by creating a perception of distinction and of an elevated social standing, a person could ultimately appear to have gained cultural capital instinctively even though it was bestowed by his family and his teachers (Moore, 2004, p. 451). Individuals could learn to portray the role of a well-educated person with a high degree of cultural capital through appropriate “speech, demeanor, and dress” (Moore, 2004, p. 451).

Reay’s (2004) study of cultural capital indicated that many parents felt that their knowledge was inadequate in areas of their children’s schooling and that they felt the need to provide additional resources if available to help their children progress. The interviews and narratives that Reay depicted reflected the inequalities that existed in schools where parents, according to teachers, were not fulfilling their roles by helping their children. The parents, on their part, felt inadequate because of their lack of preparation. Reay (2004) also emphasized the lack of “entitlement” that parents experienced when they want their children to strive for higher educational outcomes. Parents felt that their children often felt displaced and/or criticized by other children who had a greater amount of cultural capital. As a result, there is an effect of varying levels of cultural capital both on the parents of high school and college students and on the students themselves.

Smith and Zhang’s (2009) study explored the degree of helpfulness that students experienced by “parents, friends, high school teachers and guidance counselors, college

professors and academic advisors, SOAR (a college orientation program), and the first-year seminar (a one-credit hour required course) regarding specific activities” (para. 11). The questions that measured some of the responses of the advisors and professors pertained to challenging the student through coursework, providing information for the student to learn how to be a much better student, helping the student through problem and mediation and through other issues not related to the school environment. The findings of the study showed that the students’ professors and academic advisors were the least likely to help the students and the most likely to assist the students were parents, high school teachers, friends, and counselors. The study also found that female students were more likely to mention that they had received help as opposed to the male students. The study also identified how the parents’ influenced the students educational experiences and how the parents “appear consistent with traditional gender roles” (Smith & Zhang, 2009, para. 28).

Aries and Seider’s (2005) study also discussed the level of cultural capital among college students. According to the authors, some elite colleges and universities were trying to recruit students that they hoped would promote “greater economic diversity among their student body” (Aries & Seider, 2005, p. 420). However, according to Aries and Seider, colleges and universities needed to pay greater attention to lower-income students’ needs and to recognize the challenges these students experienced when they entered an elite institution. Their identity was often challenged by feelings of inadequacy and intimidation.

Aries and Seider (2005) also suggested that students in higher social class levels were more readily able to transition into elite college environments than students from low-income backgrounds. Lower income students, conversely, found it more difficult to transition because their resources were limited at the start. The study identified some material goods that many of the higher-income students possessed such as “dorm furnishings, designer clothes, expensive cars, meals off campus at expensive restaurants, and vacations” (Aries & Seider, 2005, p. 425). The authors also stated that lower income students recognized their lower status when they compared themselves to higher income students because they lacked the economic resources to purchase many of the material goods possessed by well-to-do students. In addition, low-income students felt inadequate because they felt that they were not able to present their ideas in class as clearly as their more affluent fellow students (Aries & Seider, 2005, p. 426).

Social Capital

Social capital is often associated with James Coleman’s work in the 1980’s and its association with networking with individuals who can enable one to advance in various areas including schooling. Other definitions of social capital include Pierre Bourdieu’s when he mentioned:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition-or in other words, to membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ that entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word.

(Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001, p. 98)

Portes (2000) defined the two meanings of social capital in his review of its application. In his research, he discussed the various challenges that occur when applying social capital in different contexts. He referenced Bourdieu's perspective of social capital as "instrumental, going as far as noting that people intentionally built their relations for the benefits that they would bring later" (Portes, 2000, p.2). His study goes on to further mention that social capital was defined as "(1) a source of control, (2) a source of family-mediated benefits, and (3) a source of resources mediated by nonfamily networks" (Portes, 2000, p. 2).

Teachman, Paasch, and Carver (1996) also studied how social capital is related to the attrition of students in college. "Minority students who are more socially integrated are less likely to feel alienated and drop out or transfer" (Brown & Hirschman, 2006, p. 125). These researchers decided to study this correlation between social capital and early school attrition because of the large student drop out rate. Teachman et al. (1996) assert that "social capital may occur both within and outside the family" (p. 774). Their analysis was taken from the surveys taken of eighth graders in the NELS (National Educational Longitudinal Study) concentrating on years, 1988, 1990, and 1992. This study provided the researchers with background information as well as school related information from faculty and administration. The results of the study showed that children who attended Catholic schools had acquired more social capital than children of divorced, never-married, or single parents who did not attend Catholic school.

Some studies of social capital focused their attention to one type of ethnic

background. Ream (2003) in *Counterfeit Social Capital and Mexican American Underachievement* discussed how “social network instability accompanying high mobility rates” may affect Mexican American underachievement (p. 237). With his research, he linked social capital and student geographic mobility and indicated that the constant transition from school to school will affect the students’ “educational achievement” (Ream, 2003, p. 238). The study consisted of a mixed method design including the interview of 16 students of Mexican American background and 16 students who were white who had moved from school to school (Ream, 2003). Twenty-five thousand eighth grade students were selected from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) sample. The results of the analysis show that students moving from place to place encounter problems that affect them in their school and social environment (Ream, 2003).

Social Capital in the Context of Education

Social capital can be defined as the advantages individuals possess because of their connections with other people with resources. It can also be seen as the ability to network with others to gain information and resources needed for success. In education, social capital theory has been used to study differential resources available to individuals that resulted in differential amounts of upward mobility (Perna & Titus, 2005). “Social capital may occur both within and outside the family. Within the family, social capital is represented by the amount of positive parent-child interaction” (Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996, p.774). Ream (2003) identified a lack of networking by Mexican American population as a reason for the group’s educational underachievement. Portes

(2000) described how social capital is acquired by foreigners who search for some means of community and networking. He noted that second generation educational attainment depended on family and community. Perna and Titus (2005) identified a positive effect of social capital on educational attainment. The networking of parents of students with other parents and the networking of parents with teachers and administrators in school had the result of improving the educational outcomes of their children.

Perna and Titus found smaller numbers of Hispanics and African American students enrolled in four-year universities after high school compared to their white and Asian counterparts. The authors concluded that “African Americans and Hispanics are disadvantaged in the college enrollment process not only because of their own low levels of the types of economic, human, and cultural capital that are valued in the college enrollment process but also because of the low levels of resources that are available to promote college enrollment through the social networks at the schools they attend” (Perna & Titus, 2005, p. 511).

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) studied how social capital impacted the development in youth. Their study examined data from a 20 year longitudinal study of mothers and their children in Baltimore. The researchers interviewed the mothers three times prior to interviewing the children five years later. As a follow-up to their research, two subsequent interviews were done during the children’s teenage years and then at ages 18-21. Two hundred and fifty-two youth were chosen for the analysis, and the focus of their study was to understand the amount of social capital present among teenagers.

The study measured academic success as high school graduation or GED attainment, and enrollment in higher education. Significant variables included girls not having a teenage pregnancy and birth, and boy's non-participation in criminal acts. Policy recommendations from this study included the admonition that mothers assist their children with school work, that they should communicate frequently with their children, and that they should participate fully in social activities. In sum, both cultural capital, the knowledge base of students necessary for success at school, and social capital, the ability to network with others who can provide additional cultural capital, are fundamental to students' achievement in school. For students without the cultural and social capital possessed by the middle and upper classes, transitional programs such as the one studied in this work are hypothesized as being able to contribute to the cultural and social capital necessary to succeed in school.

Latino Students and Higher Education

There is a body of literature that addresses issues that affect Latino students in general and Mexican American students more particularly, with reference to their academic achievement. Some research studies have concentrated on issues negatively affecting Mexican American students, (Hecht, Graham, & Elek, 2006; McWhirter, 2007; Ream & Rumberger, 2008) while other studies have focused on the persistence and achievement of Mexican Americans in school (Atilano, 1994). It was crucial to study the existing areas of research focused on Latinos and Higher Education to review how these types of studies have contributed to the literature in this particular field.

Canning's (1996) research focused on the need for teachers to connect with their students and not to assume that non-Mexican American teachers completely understand a culture in which they have not been raised. The study also indicated the levels of discomfort that teachers experience when the majority of their students have not had standard English as the language of discourse in their homes. According to Canning (1996), the majority of teachers need to provide examples in class that relate to Mexican American students' lives as portrayed in the literature and in personal experiences written by Mexican Americans about themselves (pp. 2-3). The study consisted of a one year volunteer student teaching program. The 39 participants were assigned to 70 classrooms at the secondary level in "two school districts" (Canning, 1996, p. 1).

All of the participants "completed a required course in multicultural education taught by the university supervisors with emphasis on honing authentic, interpersonal approaches and communication skills for building one's own rapport and knowledge about those being worked with" (Canning, 1996, p. 1). The data collected included observations, interviews, and "reports of student teachers" (Canning, 1996, p. 2). Canning (1996) concluded her study with an observation of a "need for Hispanic role models" for students because many of the students were not able to share their experiences with the white teachers, thus creating a difficult learning environment for the students. Canning also observed that the student teachers' experiences had been invaluable as they pursued their teaching careers.

Socialization and Family of the Mexican American Student

Although we must be careful not to overgeneralize, the Mexican American family often consists of a close family unit that values hard work and possesses a strong value system. This value system includes respect for elders, respect for authority, and less individualism than among Americans of northern European descent. In many middle and working class Mexican American families, Mexican American students work hard at home and at school and, particularly in the lower middle class, students tend to work outside of the home to contribute to the family's finances. According to Malone (2009), students acquire many skills at home, but there are other students who need additional guidance. "This is particularly the case in low-income high schools where access to quality and timely information is often limited due to staffing constraints and insufficient school resources and where a majority of youth are potentially first-generation college students" (Malone, 2009, p. 23).

Additionally, the educational perspective for many Latino families implies a broader definition of schooling than just basic knowledge acquisition; it means that children are raised to be well behaved and to learn appropriate "manners and moral values" (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 423).

Villenas and Dehyle (1999) identify two types of knowledge, namely, *educación* and *consejos*. *Educación*, more broadly construed than the word, "education" in English, is gradually developed through a child's conversations and interactions with family members. Parents are able to give the child advice using stories and conversation (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 423). In addition, this type of "education" also helps

children develop communication, manners, and work ethic. *Consejos* 2 are pieces of advice that parents share with their children in an effort to teach them positive values and morals to guide them in the future (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 423). By maintaining their cultural traditions, children continue to foster and maintain these ideas in all areas of their life, therefore contributing to the continuity of these “teachings” and to their culture (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, pps. 426, 441).

Some parents of immigrant children develop negative attitudes towards formal education in the US because of their lack of understanding of the US educational system and because of financial costs associated with education. Additionally, they may believe that their children may not benefit from schools as they are currently structured. Some parents do not possess high expectations for their children because of “a lack of faith” in the “value of schooling” (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001, p. 548).

Gandara’s (1982) study of “[seventeen] [educated] Mexican American women” of underprivileged upbringing “investigated 10 areas of the women’s backgrounds ranging from child-rearing practices used by the parents to peer and school variables” (p. 167). A retrospective instrument was used for the study, consisting of an interview of 117 questions divided into “10 categories of background information, including demographic variables, religion, parental characteristics/child-rearing practices, physical environment of the home, school variables, peer relations, communities, health factors, ethnic identity/acculturation, personal attitudes, and experiences” (Gandara, 1982, p. 170).

According to Gandara’s (1982) findings:

Mothers were ... more likely than fathers to encourage higher education and

nontraditional roles for their daughters. However, despite the strong support the young women received, particularly from their mothers, approximately one-fourth of them reported that they did not know what aspirations their parents held for them. (p. 171)

Some unique characteristics that Gandara (1982) discovered through her research of women who were successful in higher education were their connection towards religion and their continuous speaking of their first language as well as learning English in the US (p. 172). These women seemed to have more parental support than others (Gandara, 1982, p. 175).

González, Stone, and Jovel (2003) researched two groups of Mexican American students in post-secondary education using a life history methodology to understand the connection between Latina students and their family and school environments. The first group in their study had completed all of their K-12 education and members of the group were currently enrolled in universities. In the second group, the majority of the students were enrolled in a community college. Their findings showed the importance of parental support to the students. According to González et al. (2003), this support was not only in the parents being a positive influence but also providing “emotional support” (p. 154). Also, they noted that “of the twelve women in the university group, three were able to accumulate additional social capital from their siblings” (González et al., 2003, p. 155).

University students received better preparation through gifted and talented programs; their teachers were positive influences to them because they received motivation to do well in school from them as well as from the school staff. In contrast,

community college students did not receive as much support from school staff and relied on their own peers for motivation to continue in school in order to attain degrees (González et al., 2003). These students received little to no help on pursuing a degree in higher education, their teachers were not influential, and the students received negative reinforcement from teachers and counselors (González et al., 2003). Because many Latino students are traditionally raised to respect their elders, if teachers or counselors do not help to motivate these students towards higher education, they will begin to waiver and believe that they are not capable of succeeding. Gonzalez's study emphasized the degree of social capital that each of the different groups received in their educational settings and the resulting difference in educational outcomes (González et al., 2003, pp. 157-59).

In this first area of the literature review, a lack of cultural capital could be connected to those instructors who are not very comfortable with cultures outside of their own. If the instructor had grown up in a multicultural environment with accessibility to a variety of travel and an opportunity for cultural exchange, the instructors would not have reacted as unresponsive to the students of other cultural backgrounds. This area of research also described the importance of work ethic within the Mexican American home environment and the social norms of the Mexican American family and both of these situations affect the absence of cultural and social capital because work takes precedence over education and many parents were not willing to learn about the importance of education because they lacked an understanding

of it and they were also concerned with the financial responsibility that is associated with pursuing an education.

Students' Experiences with Transition and Influential Factors

The following section of this literature review addresses the various types of positive and negative student experiences with schooling. According to Oswald and Clark (2003), the transition for students from high school to college can be a time of stressful change in their lives. In some cases, “psychological dependencies, poorer social skills, and personal-emotional adjustment” (Oswald & Clark, 2003, p. 188) detract from their movement towards independence. Isolation from home, personal decision making and new social connections are all experienced at once during the first semester in school (Oswald & Clark, 2003).

Fowler and Luna (2009) reviewed the historical background of the transitional programs which offered credit coursework specifically focusing on programs that enable high school students to begin taking college coursework while they are still enrolled in high school. According to Fowler and Luna (2009), these courses provided students with an opportunity to successfully transition into a college and or university environment. Many students transition from high school to college and continue to work a 20-40 hour per week schedule, not realizing the demands of college coursework.

Other students do not know what to expect of their new college experience and they are, therefore, unlikely to fit into the academic environment because of their separation from family and friends (Budny & Paul, 2003). A successful transition from high school to college requires students to develop time management skills and skills

related to learning material both from lectures and books. Additionally, according to Budny and Paul (2003) both students and parents undergo a separation during this time of new freedom and independence for students. A third required transition was related to the ability to cope with feelings of loneliness as they progress through their first semester in a new environment without their family nucleus (Budny & Paul, 2003). Finally, some students are not as academically prepared as they need to be, and some do require developmental course work because of this lack of preparation.

Disconnections in Students' Transitions to Institutions of Higher Learning

Mexican American students experience numerous challenges during their transition to college. Some include a lack of guidance from faculty and counselors in high schools. Others include financial challenges as well as demeaning stereotypes on the part of some professors and some fellow students in college. Numerous Mexican American students are not receiving an adequate amount of information in high school to enable them to understand what is required to succeed in college (Kirst, 2004, para. 2).

Lopez' (1995) research studies 100 Mexican American students who have stayed in college. A questionnaire was used to evaluate the students' background and experiences. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and it took about an estimated 30 minutes to complete. The results of the study showed that male students who were closer to completing their studies had encountered more difficult challenges at home as compared to female students. Lopez (1995) identified financial challenges that prevented a good number of Mexican American students from moving ahead in their education. Many Mexican American students have to work and to attend school, and

because of limited finances, they cannot attend school on a full-time basis. Lopez' (1995) research also referenced the apparent discrimination that both females and males experience while trying to pursue an education. Females were found to have experienced gender related discrimination and males experienced racial discrimination in their collegiate environment (Lopez, 1995, p. 501). Recent studies on the transition of high school to college are not only focused on the student's perceptions of their experiences but they are also focused on other areas which affect the students' transition into college as Brown and Hirschman (2006) discussed the impact of how the removal of affirmative action would reflect on the admissions policies of the University of Washington. This particular study focused on transition rate of high school seniors in 1998 to 2003. This study concluded that the removal of the affirmative action rule did negatively affect the enrollment of minority students. "The decrease in minority enrollments occurred, in large part, because of the drop in applications by minority students" (Brown & Hirschman, 2006, p. 125). This study revealed that many students felt as if they would not be considered because they could not compete with the other students who unacknowledged their high grades and test scores.

Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao's (2008) research focuses on the acculturation of Latino students and their connection to family (p. 297). A longitudinal study was done with families of Latino origin living in Arizona and North Carolina. Interviews were used as the instrument for data collection. The final sample consisted of 804 participants. The results of the study "showed that U.S. cultural involvement was a cultural asset related to higher family cohesion, adaptability, and familism, and lower parent-

adolescent conflict” (Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008, p. 304). Smokowski et al. (2008) also showed that it was valuable to work with “Latino families to decrease parent-adolescent acculturation conflict” (306). Their research shows that as Latinos acculturate, it was difficult for parents to accept how their children change. Many Latino parents are traditional, and they try to maintain the family’s unity and the traditional mores associated with the culture (Smokowski et al., 2008, p. 297). In some families, a continuous struggle between parents and youth creates tension within the family environment. Smokowski et al. (2008) have researched that a constant bicultural scenario in which both youth and parents understand and accept both cultures fosters a more positive environment for both parents and youth (p. 306).

Other studies also have focused on the disconnection that students experience in their high school to college transition. The Stanford University Bridge Project was a six-year research project that analyzed policies implemented during the last year of high school and the beginning of college as designated by each institution represented in the study (Kirst, 2004, para. 7). Researchers tried to understand the disconnection that occurred as a result of a student’s transition from high school to college and how much information was provided to students, parents, and educators to aide in students’ future educational attainment and career goals (Kirst, 2004, para. 8).

Kirst (2004) found a major discrepancy between students who participated in a fast track program and those who followed a regular course load and sequence. There was a lack of attention given to those students who fell into average to lower academic

levels. Kirst (2004) also discussed the inequality that exists across the high school counseling centers relative to information about college.

Economic Conditions of Students

Low-income students tend to enroll at community colleges rather than at four-year institutions (Kirst, 2004, para. 3). According to Kirst (2004), teachers often do take a leading role in guiding students as they prepare for college, but they are hindered in finding current admission and placement information required by colleges and universities, and low socioeconomic status (SES) parents usually lack the knowledge necessary to help students prepare for college (para. 13). Low SES parents find it difficult to guide their children through their high school to college transitional experience because they themselves have never attended college, nor have they received the necessary preparation to guide their children through admissions, degree plans, and financial aid. Additionally, many parents are often embarrassed or fearful of teachers, counselors, or admission officers' expectations. Parents do not believe that they are qualified to answer questions from their children about college. Instead of helping, they sometimes hinder their children as they remove themselves from their children's transitional educational stage, creating an even greater separation in the home environment.

Low SES parents are not accustomed to guide their children with the paperwork and questions associated with college admission and with subsequent study in college. It was difficult for the first time college student to seek help in the home and this, of course, was an extreme disadvantage compared to other students whose parents

successfully have gone through the transitional and degree attainment processes of colleges and have become a knowledgeable source of information for their children regarding attendance in college.

Many students of color, including those of Mexican origin, do not have the same level of academic skill as their non-Hispanic white peers, and consequently take longer in obtaining their degrees. Many spend more time taking courses through remediation programs at their institutions than do non-Hispanic white students (Kirst, 2004). Often, they do not complete their degrees because of the amount of prerequisite work required and it disheartens and disappoints them from succeeding and from attaining their degree.

According to Venezia (2006), the majority of students of color, including Mexican Americans, attend public institutions, and many are poorly prepared in high school and, thus, experience a lack of preparation for their college experience. Students of color are not graduating from high school at the same rate as the non-Hispanic white students, nor are they at the same academic level (Venezia, 2006, p. 16). Some research, however, does take note of changes taking place to help students of color at institutions of higher education. Some institutions are beginning to offer significant opportunities for non-traditional students of color of low socioeconomic status, such as providing them with orientation and mentoring (Bozick & DeLuca, 2005, p. 530).

According to Laden (1998), community colleges are crucial to helping students from diverse backgrounds (p. 1). These institutions serve the majority of non-traditional students and students of color. Latino students are often identified as non-traditional students because they tend to fit into the category of being first generation college

students with a low SES background, a relative lack of preparation for academia, and part-time student status (Laden, 1998, p. 1). In addition, Latinos often are raised in a culture different from that of the majority. Latino culture is one part of their lives often ignored and/or subdued in the world of academia.

Reasons for Student Attrition

Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth, and Thomas (1999) addressed the issue of dropout rates affecting Latino students, particularly at the high school level (para. 16). Some of the primary concerns regarding Latino dropouts have been excessive absences, some migrant work or other work, and a disconnection between school and home (Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth, & Thomas, 1999, para. 17-22). In college, according to Kirst (2004), an estimated fifty percent of Latino freshman students drop out (Kirst, 2004, para. 5). Kirst believes that community college and university counseling programs need to help students understand what their future employment expectations and opportunities will be without a college degree. Some colleges have created “pre-college orientation programs” to help parents and students through their transitioning experience (Budny & Paul, 2003, p. 1).

Jeria and Roth (1992) also reference the severe disparity in dropout rates in college between non-Hispanic whites on the one hand, and Latinos on the other (p. 1). Some Latino students attend schools that have a minimal number of Latino faculty and this affects the students’ connection to teachers and to their surroundings because they are neither culturally understood nor able to communicate in their first spoken language.

Some studies link the underachieving of Mexican American students to the lack of social opportunities in school (Ream, 2003, p. 238).

It was difficult for Mexican American parents to motivate their children to achieve when they lack the cultural capital and resources of other non-Hispanic white parents. Many parents help motivate their children by using their own lives as examples since they were unable to study and attain higher education and were not as fortunate as their children concerning schooling (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 424). Often, these conversations were the only empowerment many of the students received to help motivate them to attend college because they were not given other types of resources from home. Interestingly, many of the school's staff and faculty do not necessarily value these types of conversations, nor do they recognize the invaluable importance they are for their students' lives (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 424).

Some researchers describe students' perceptions about their teachers' stereotypes as believing that they, the students, lacked motivation and performed at a low level, yet in the research, students did not believe that they were sufficiently challenged by the professor and this resulted in a continuous lack of motivation for the student (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 432). Additionally, students who did not have family members who had participated in a college or university environment were not as comfortable with the transition to higher education and experienced greater difficulty and an increased number of challenges during their first semester and first year of higher education (Patiniotis & Holdsworth, 2005, p. 84).

This second area of the literature review also targeted the lack of social skills which does not promote the networking that social capital is derived from and this area but it also re-emphasized the fact that many of the students work many hours to help support their families and themselves. They have not acquired the cultural capital to help them understand that work and school requires a certain degree of dedication and commitment. Furthermore, many of these students do not realize the requirements that are associated with transitioning from high school to college.

Types of Transitional Programs

Jeria and Roth (1992) identified several different retention programs that helped keep students from dropping out of school and that fostered a positive transitional experience. The College of William and Mary has a summer program for junior year high school students that enabled them to familiarize themselves with the institution. Should students decide to pursue their educational goals at William and Mary, an advisor was assigned to aid in helping the student through the high school to college transition. Rutgers University's program, in particular, was focused on attracting minority students. The program created a connection with students via telephone and other means of communication. Students were invited to visit the campus, and scholarships were provided for Latino and African American students. Counseling and tutorial help also were provided to guide the student through the transitioning stage (Jeria & Roth, 1992).

Texas Tech University's program particularly focused on creating a partnership environment among school districts and the University. By enabling a faculty member at

Texas Tech to maintain constant communication with a participating high school classroom, the professor and students were able to discuss different issues of the college experience and this communication will help students find the University a more welcoming environment (Jeria & Roth, 1992, p. 4).

Laden (1998) referenced the *Puente Project*, a joint Latino transfer program between the University of California and several community colleges, as a means of helping students with the transfer from high school to college. This program celebrated students' culture and it fostered inclusion from the start. By recognizing students' cultural differences from that of the majority culture, the program could then guide students through various transitional experiences and it helped them understand that they are valued and important in an elite university environment (Laden, 1998). The *Puente Project* also revealed that some Latino students were relatively under-prepared, and consequently, they were enrolled in several developmental courses prior to their attempt to complete a regular college credit course load. Upon reviewing the transcripts of more than 2,000 students, researchers found that many of the students requiring developmental courses were first generation college students and that they needed additional preparation for an elite university experience (Laden, 1998, p. 8).

The *Puente Project* helped students by means of a recruiting effort in high school, and it helped them transition into college because it provided a mentoring program that assisted students in accessing their mentors and communicating with them. Both students and their parents were provided with an opportunity to communicate with staff members at the designated University of California campus. Workshops and

orientation programs assisted in fostering a positive environment for the students in a university context.

Furthermore, the *Puente Project* helped retain students in colleges and universities because it helped foster academic knowledge and social comfort in a university environment (Laden, 1998, p. 14). This model is an example that could help other institutions of higher learning to create a bridge [“puente” means “bridge”] between the students’ high school and college experience (Laden, 1998, pp. 21-22).

The third area of this literature review focused on the types of transitional programs and within this review, I was able to connect cultural and social capital by providing programs that could help benefit the students’ preparation by providing them with remediation, mentoring, and orientation.

Study of Composition and Its Relation to Latino Students

Research has focused on trying to understand both the writing process as well as the training that instructors of writing are given in college (Whiteman, 1980). Even though there are books on how to teach writing, such as *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*, (Shaughnessy, 1979) and *The St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching Writing* (Glenn, Goldthwaite, & Connors, 2003), many teachers are still not prepared to teach writing as it relates to many Latino students (Glenn, Goldthwaite, & Connors, 2003). Many universities have English programs that prepare teachers to teach in composition and literature. Despite this, many new teachers remain at a loss when they encounter students who do not know how to write an introductory phrase or how to overcome a “mental block” in the writing process. Bartholomae

(1985) discussed how students learn to write, speak, and act within a university environment. When other students and faculty interact with each other, new students are able to understand how to act like students and, as a result, they become familiar with the role of the audience and its significance to writing. In this way, students learn to write not only for the teacher but for others as well (Bartholomae, 1985).

Progress has been made in trying to understand the writing process and its effect on children and adults. Students are unable to write in a moderately sophisticated manner because they lack the necessary skills to enable them to write well. Often freshman composition is their first exposure to formal writing. According to Rose (1985), freshman composition originated in 1874 at Harvard because of the lack of writing skills of undergraduate students. The need for remediation coursework has generated much discussion in colleges in the area of composition. There has been much discussion about the appropriateness of developmental course work in college more generally (Rose, 1985).

Research Exploring the Writing Process

First, learning to teach the writing process is difficult because people have different levels of writing skills. Some individuals use some of the traditional composition process as described by Hayes and Flower (1979) while others use revision as a form of improving their writing skills as delineated by Ellen Nold (1979) (Whiteman, 1980). Difficulties in the writing process exist and are evident both among children and adults; however, research studies also indicate that improvement in writing

is possible, either through a change in the curriculum, a new writing program, or simply by means of a one-to-one interaction of teacher-to-student or student-to-student.

Graves, Valles, and Rueda (2000) used a bilingual educational setting to evaluate writing instruction by creating four different environments. Students in Group A primarily focused on writing of interactive journals, while students in Group B wrote journal entries at the beginning of class with the teacher responding to students' entries on the same day. The third group, Group C, specifically focused on expository report writing, and Group D concentrated on writing a journal, revising, and, in addition, had frequent spelling tests (Graves, Valles, & Rueda, 2000, p. 5). The study found that all of the groups improved their writing skills and that the writing experience had a positive impact on the amount of writing done per week.

Tompkins (2002) studied seventh grade writers who had difficulty understanding revision and editing. Students were assessed by means of a classroom reading inventory. The majority of students were able to read at the sixth grade level and on average, all students read at least at the 4.5 grade level. Writing was assessed along four dimensions: "ideas, organization, language and style, and mechanical correctness" (Tompkins, 2002, p. 177). At the start of the study, students' writing exhibited a lack of coherence, organization, and sentence composition (Tompkins, 2002, p. 177).

Also, at the beginning of the study, students exhibited a negative attitude towards the writing process. For example, one student stated, "I don't like to write. It's hard and it hurts my brain to think so hard." Another student wrote, "When I have to write, I'm thinking about being done because I really don't like to write" (Tompkins, 2002, p.

179). The students lacked awareness of the writing process, the purpose of writing, and a clear understanding of their writing audience.

As a result of the study, the students' writing did improve, and their mechanical errors greatly diminished (Tompkins, 2002, p. 184). The instructor of the course used writing to focus on the composition process and on completion of work (Tompkins, 2002, p. 188). According to Tompkins (2002), the instructor used collaborative learning as a vehicle to help her students compose short summaries and then to gradually imitate her composition process. By the end of the semester, students had learned to understand the components of the writing process and had further developed their reading and writing skills.

McClendon (2001) described her method of teaching and explained why students should write about what is important to them. By incorporating the students in the planning of the curriculum, they were able to exchange ideas, fully to participate, and to become more involved by means of the writing process (McClendon, 2001, p. 123). This type of teaching can help students with their writing difficulties because it pertains to purpose. The students are able to understand why the assignment is written. This gives them the opportunities to problem solve and to take time to evaluate the questions: "Why am I writing this paper; Who is going to read it?" (McClendon, 2001, p.118).

McAvoy and Core (2000) described their perception of the writing process and the difficulties that students had with the process. Among writing problems affecting students, two of the most important were a lack of proficiency in English, and a resistance to group revisionary work.

Deborah Core, a Senior Professor of English and coordinator of the freshman writing program at Eastern Kentucky University, was asked to participate as a writing tutor in a program that would try to strengthen students' writing skills (McAvoy & Core, 2000, p. 48). Core was asked to respond to students' problems and to engage them in revising their work in an effort to enable them to understand changes that needed to be made in their compositions (McAvoy & Core, 2000, p. 48). McAvoy required that students have periodic reviews of their papers and had students read portions of their papers to receive feedback from their peers (McAvoy & Core, 2000, p. 49). She required her students to turn in copies of their papers a week ahead of a scheduled meeting of the group.

Results of this process were that teachers of students being tutored noticed that there were fewer mechanical problems, but incoherence and inconsistency still were present in the writing. In addition, students became frustrated over the assessment that they received on the assignment considering the amount of time that they devoted to it (McAvoy & Core, 2000, p. 49). After reviewing results, both McAvoy and Core (2000) agreed to focus on two issues: content and writing problems. Both professors began to evaluate the role of the writing instructor and categorized it into four areas: editor, lecturer, tutor, and mentor. The one-to-one exchange helped the students the most, and the balanced writing instruction in the four areas did result in positive change in the students' writing.

Flynn (1988) discussed the writing process among first year women students at Michigan Tech. Throughout her writing assignments, Flynn (1988) tried to open the

door to feminist issues and emphasized that the classroom was a place where teachers could introduce topics of gender and their relation to writing (p. 581). At first, students in the class did not feel that they were able to open up and express themselves; however, the introduction of women's issues gave them a reason to elaborate and process. By giving women an opportunity to express their identities through writing, students began to communicate in their own voice. Writing helped women share internalized feelings (Flynn, 1988, p. 583).

Studies in Writing

Whiteman (1980) explored the development of writing and the need for further research in this area. In her study, influenced by Kinneavy's (1971) identification of the various modes of discourse, and Britton's (1975) introduction to using qualitative research in the study of writing, she argues that there are four themes of research development in writing (Whiteman, 1980). These four are the use of technology, the learning of the writing process with special populations, revisionary work and its implications, and the difficulties that graduate students experience with research writing.

Kinsler's (1990) research focused on revision and peer review as a teaching method in a classroom. The study included the participation of 37 college students from New York. The study incorporated two groups, and in the first, the group experienced lecture and discussion, drafting for the assignment, feedback and revision, and a final draft submission. The second created a theatrical assignment instead of discussion, and they received teacher feedback and worked in a collaborative peer editing group setting. The results demonstrated that student collaboration did have a positive influence in the

overall quality of the students' essays. Group work assisted student understanding of the thesis statement and helped establish an effective organizational structure for the essays. The conclusion of the study was that collaborative work assisted in the development of stronger revision skills.

Another trend in writing research was the integration of technology in writing. Reynolds (2006) asserts that the teaching of writing "is beginning to feel very keenly the responsibility for educating students about electronic writing technologies, and that creates a new level of anxiety" (p. 247). Another study referencing the use of computers in teaching writing was conducted by Hansman and Wilson (1998). Their study indicated that many adult learners could learn to write through the use of computer classrooms. The environment helps students participate in their own learning exchange (Hansman & Wilson, 1998, p. 2). The participants in their study consisted of twelve adult learners who participated in a computer classroom course environment. The findings of the study indicated that computers gave students control over their writing process.

The students felt that computers made writing easier because it gave them an opportunity to proofread and to make corrections. In the study, students also met with their instructor one-on-one in a classroom setting, and students were able to interact with their peers, which helped their writing process. Having their writing assignments on a computer made it easier for students to return to the assignment and to engage in editing their work, thus resulting in a positive writing experience for them (Hansman & Wilson, 1998, p. 9). The authors concluded their study by encouraging teachers to use the

computer as a constructive tool and not just as a word processor; they believe that the computer will promote and continue to motivate students to write.

Latinos and Writing

Jimenez (2000) researched the effects of literacy and identity in four bilingual classrooms with four teachers and eighty-five students (p. 971). The study collected classroom observations, student and teacher interviews, and instructive exercises for students in both reading and writing. His research focused on the effect of their English and Spanish proficiency on their writing, and also on how they perceived their identity (Jimenez, 2000, p. 972). Jimenez believed that to learn to write successfully, there is a need for instructors to accept the culture and language of the students, and this is often not expressed by teachers nor by the educational environment (Jimenez, 2000, p. 975).

The aforementioned *Puente Project* collected data that was analyzed by three academics, a teacher, a counselor, and an assistant dean. More than 2,000 transcripts of Latino students were reviewed and the transcripts revealed that students frequently had been placed in the wrong English course and that they also had not been given any guidance in writing. The project made use of a writing component that focused on connections between the writing of students and their cultural background. There were two parts to this writing curriculum with the first concentrating on developmental English. This section focused its attention to familiarizing students with textual material related to their own cultural background. The students connected those experiences to their own through writing (Laden, 1998, p. 11).

In the second part of the writing component, students familiarized themselves with the same type of subject matter, but the writing stressed dialogue and interaction, and Latino guest writers and speakers were provided to the students. Students, then, were able to write about what was familiar to them (Laden, 1998, pp. 10-11). The conclusion of this research was that in teaching writing to Latinos, one should have them write about what is familiar to them, in an environment where teachers care about them, and where they are introduced to role models in writing of their own ethnicity.

Gonzalez (1982) provided us with a thought provoking study of Mexican American students and how they write in her article entitled, *Teaching Mexican American Students to Write: Capitalizing on the Culture*. In her study, she discussed the need for teachers of writing to understand the culture of their students, particularly the *culturemes*, defined by Poyatos as "any portion of cultural activity or non-activity perceived through sensible and intelligible signs with symbolic value and susceptible of being broken down into smaller units or amalgamated into larger ones" ¹ (Altehenger-Smith, 2003).

The fourth and final section of the literature review did not have a specific connection to the area of social capital, but it is evident that if a person is born into a household that provides generous amounts of cultural capital with reading and writing material, an individual's writing will flourish and; thus, the individual will have developed stronger writing skills and be able to write within different rhetorical modes in an academic setting.

Summary

As previously stated in Chapter I , the purpose of this study was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing. Insight gained will assist instructors to better instruct Mexican American students in their writing. Success in writing will help these students' perform better on academic writing requirements; thus, increase the student's grade performance in coursework and increase student retention. Overall, this review of the literature discussed important areas related to cultural and social capital in addition to the research on writing, and it also highlighted several transitional programs and their effectiveness. This chapter reviewed the literature in four areas: (a) Latino Students and Higher Education, (b) Students' Experiences with Transition and Influential Factors (c) Types of Transitional Programs, and (d) Study of Composition and its Relation to Latino Students. Finally, Chapter III will present the research design and methodological framework for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study as presented in Chapter I was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing. The research questions guiding the study are the following:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?
3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

This chapter will address the design and methodological approaches as categorized in the following manner: Methodological framework, role of the researcher, site, participant selection, research instruments, methods of data collection, data collection, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of the data.

Methodological Framework

This study used a qualitative approach with a basic interpretive design. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) described qualitative research as a "field of inquiry" (p. 1), which can include any relative field of discipline. Within the area of qualitative research, there are varying paradigms, research strategies, and methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

“Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 9).

Since this research focus consisted on the interpretation of experiences, both interviews and written documentation and the perception of Mexican American students’ as they progress through their first semester of college in the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) program, a basic interpretive approach was used to understand the meanings drawn from the experience. “The constructivist or interpretivist believes that to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). According to Merriam (1998), a basic study includes the following characteristics: “description, interpretation, and understanding,” and it also “identifies recurrent patterns in the form of themes or categories” (p. 12).

Merriam’s (1998) definition of qualitative research “is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Qualitative research enables the researcher to interpret the experience of others by observing and interacting with people in their own environment. According to Seale (2003), quality is important in qualitative research but it is difficult to use some form of standardization for all types of studies. Qualitative research was best suited for this study because it allowed the researcher to incorporate several research instruments such as interviews, writing samples, and in many cases, field observation. Since this study is particularly focused on the influence of culture on Mexican American students’ writings,

qualitative research is invaluable to learning and understanding what this researcher and many others can interpret and analyze through narrative analysis. If this study were done in using a quantitative method all of the rich, textual description would be removed and I would be limited to just one or multiple sets of numerical analysis rather than the historical, emotional, and thematic context of the words on the page and the connection of the author and reader to each individual experience.

With every study, there are different approaches used and the researcher may follow a different pattern with regards to the study and; thus, it is difficult to assume that all research could follow a set norm. This qualitative study will give the researcher an opportunity to interpret written textual examples of a group of students. Schwandt (1994) referenced the interpretivist as someone who interprets in order to understand the true meaning. “Interpretivists wrestle with maintaining the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity, engagement and objectification. They celebrate the permanence and priority of the real world of first-person, subjective experience” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 119). In this study, I too, made difficult decisions in ensuring that I was interpreting the text with as much subjectivity and objectivity as possible.

Holstein and Gubrium (1994) suggested that “interpretative practice can be understood to involve the articulation of publicly recognized structures, categories, or images with aspects of experience” (p. 267). In this study, themes were identified as a result of my interpretation of the text as I sought to understand what these students were trying to describe through their oral and written responses.

The Role of the Researcher

I am a bilingual Mexican American first generation graduate student. I am employed as a professor of English at a community college in the Southwest where I have collected the data for this research study. I have taught composition and literature at this same institution for fourteen years. This community college is very dear to me since I started to take college courses at this same institution during my senior year while I was enrolled at a private high school. I attended high school during the day and took college classes in the evening. This experience led me to take additional college coursework and work as an English tutor at this institution before transferring to a private university to complete my undergraduate studies in English.

Before completing my baccalaureate studies, I began a Master's program in English Literature and Language. Once I began my career in teaching, I became very interested in the area of methodology and the adult learner which led me to pursue a second Master's in the area of Adult Education at a public university. My desire to continue to pursue post-graduate work in the field of Adult Education has been an invaluable opportunity to explore many more areas of research that interest my desire to help students especially minority students achieve higher education.

While teaching and working on post-graduate work, I have come to fit the role of a non-traditional graduate student. This experience has given me an opportunity to further understand the various factors that, in many ways, can contribute to or hinder students from completing their studies. As a Mexican American, I am very familiar with

many of the traditional cultural customs and norms that affect and/or influence who I am and this creates a bias of cultural familiarity.

Furthermore, traditions and family are very important to my identity and my role as a researcher was to understand how cultural pride was embedded in the writing of Mexican American college students and to identify cultural patterns reflected in the writings of students when they compose their compositions. I chose to study writing skills as opposed to speaking skills because the writing process gives each individual participant time to think about their subject, thus possibly capturing a more profound and insightful statement than would be obtained verbally. "Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis carries with it a responsibility to identify one's shortcomings and biases that might impact the study" (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 98). My personal bias towards this study was twofold. First, I am able to connect to the Mexican American student because of my own ethnicity and second, I am very familiar with the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) program and its purpose because of a previous research study I did using this same transitional program.

Site

The Institute of Student Success (IOSS), a transitional high school to college program, at a community college located in a large city in the Southwest United States with a majority Latino population. The community college has a student body of approximately 23,000 students, and it is one of the largest community colleges in the nation. The transitional program began in 1999 with a cohort of 114 students, the majority of Hispanic descent.

In qualitative research, site assessment is addressed according to the study being performed (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The transitional program recruits students at the beginning of their senior year from various inner city public high schools and charter schools as well. The IOSS program is unlike other student orientation programs because its target population is at-risk and low socio-economic Latino youth. The youth are from four different school districts and charter schools in the area.

The program initiates in the fall term of the high school senior year. IOSS personnel conduct voluntary recruiting workshops to enroll students into the program. After recruitment, the IOSS personnel hold continuous workshops at each participating high school to help the parents and students to 1) register for the IOSS, 2) to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, 3) to complete a request of transcripts form, and 4) to register for the ACCUPLACER TEST (ACCUP), a required entry placement examination for all students. The IOSS workshops are concluded by May prior to the student's participation in the program during the next academic year.

The program establishes a cohort effect by creating a learning community component. Students are registered for a student orientation course called "Strategies for Success" in combination with a developmental reading course and/or a Freshman Composition I or developmental English writing course. This transitional program is housed within the Office of the Evening, Weekend, and Distance Education at a community college in the Southwest. The program has effectively shown growth in Latino participation and focused on the transition of high school to college.

Furthermore, the IOSS program offered at this college is one of the few transitional programs that has continued to reach out to a student population of several school districts and charter schools to help students receive credit for courses taken in the summer at no cost to the student because of grants. This transitional program was selected because of its large Latino representation and its emphasis on students beginning their college coursework with Freshman Composition I offered during the summer after the students' complete high school.

Participant Selection

Seidman (1998) stated that “because the basic assumptions underlying an interview study are different from those of an experimental study, selecting participants is approached differently” (p. 44), and I used purposeful sampling to an extent. Purposeful sampling is selecting a sample for the purpose of a research study. In this study, I had to select only those students participating in the IOSS program, those students who would be enrolled in Freshman Composition I, and those students who had a Mexican origin or Mexican American ethnicity. As a result, the sample pool became smaller and smaller. Seidman (1998) also addressed the sample size for a research study and he stated, “even if researchers use a purposeful sampling technique designed to gain maximum variation and then add to their sample through a snowballing process, they must know when they have interviewed enough participants” (p. 47).

The participating students for this qualitative study are attending college for the first time. For this study, a sample of 29 students enrolled in Freshman Composition I were randomly selected from a total of 73 participating students enrolled in the IOSS

program. The IOSS staff selected the random sample of students through a computerized program. From this selected sample of 29 students, the IOSS staff contacted the students via telephone and in person to ask if they would be willing to participate in this research study. There was a much smaller group of participants for this summer 2009 because a research university in the East coast initiated a year long study of the program and required that all IOSS students have a minimum of one developmental course to participate. Many of the students enrolled for this study did not meet the minimum requirements of being of Mexican American ethnicity and enrolled in Freshman Composition I.

For this reason, the IOSS program enlisted only 73 students compared to an average of 159 from 2006-2009. Out of the 73 IOSS participants, 29 students were enrolled in Freshman Composition I. Of the 29 students, 2 dropped the course and 12 students fit the criteria of having been identified as having a Mexican American background. This selection process was also done by the staff of the office of IOSS. The final list of twelve purposefully selected participants from this IOSS subgroup were invited to participate in the research study as referenced in Table 1, and they were informed that the study would require interviews and samples of their writing.

Table 1

Original List of Twelve Randomly Selected Students by Generation

Number of Student	Pseudonym
Student-1	Bianca
Student-2	Lisa
Student-3	Penelope
Student-4	Ana
Student-5	Joel
Student-6	Javier
Student-7	Katia
Student-8	Leonardo
Student-9	Alberto
Student-10	Rosa
Student-11	Karolina
Student-12	Marina

For reasons described below, of the twelve students who initially agreed to participate in the study, seven students completed the study. Throughout the study, during the initial interviews, I reminded the students that during the last week of classes, all copies of the research paper would be collected via the office of the IOSS or could be sent to the researcher via e-mail, including the narrative writing samples. The academic writing sample would not be completed until the last week of classes.

Unfortunately, of the twelve students, only four students submitted the research paper and narratives in a timely manner. The remaining students were continuously contacted every week by the staff of the IOSS program in an effort to collect the writing samples. I petitioned an amendment to the office of the IRB to request permission to

provide each student who would complete the study with a gift card in appreciation for their participation in the program, and also as an incentive possibly to motivate others to submit their writing samples and to complete the study.

I continued this process of communication with students whose files were incomplete and extended the deadline for submission until December 3, 2009. I extended the deadline to collect a larger sample for analysis. The additional time allotted for the paper would enable students gradually to complete their participation in the study. After repeated phone calls to the students, both by me and by the IOSS staff, Joel, student #5 in the original list of the twelve participants stated that he had accidentally “erased” all of his information on his USB and that he had thrown away the only printed and graded copy he had received from his instructor because he believed it was saved on the USB. When I asked if he could search again through his paperwork if just by chance, he could have left a rough draft in a folder, he said that he could not provide any information and that all was lost.

The second student who withdrew from the study was Ana, student #4 in the original list of the twelve participants who, after having submitted a wonderful sample of her research paper and completed the initial interview, stated in an e-mail to me that she could not continue in the study. A third student, who did not complete the study, was Bianca, student #1 in the original list of participants. She was a student who experienced a sports related injury during the summer. She then received therapy and she did speak to me on several occasions and stated that she would submit the work. In the end, however, she never did submit any further writing samples and she no longer returned

phone messages or answered any phone calls from the office of IOSS or by this researcher.

The fourth student who was removed from the list of participants was Penelope, student #3. She was contacted several times and did respond in November and stated that she would come for the last interview and turn in the material. Unfortunately, she did not follow through. I made one final attempt and left a message with a relative of Penelope, but she never responded. The IOSS coordinator and I made other attempts to contact students #1 and #3, but without success. Finally, the IOSS coordinator made an effort to locate the students during the second summer and fall 2009 sessions to speak to them individually about the importance of completing the project, but to no avail.

As a result of the students' non-participation, I identified several components affecting the data collection. The first problem was that many of these students had never participated in a research project and, therefore, they did not understand the importance of their participation in this research. The participants who did fulfill all requirements indicated to me that it was their first time participating in a research study.

A second issue was that many of the students work part-time or full-time which limits the time that they have available to participate for a research study. A third probable cause of non-completion was that some of the students also had children to take care of and it became evident that because of their other responsibilities, this research project was not one of their priorities. Finally and importantly, some of the students may have felt inadequate both in terms of verbal communication and particularly in writing,

and this may have led to their reluctance to participate; thus, 7 students completed the request for information in full as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Number of Participants Who Completed the Research Study

Number of Student	Pseudonym
Student-1	Lisa
Student-2	Javier
Student-3	Katia
Student-4	Leonardo
Student-5	Alberto
Student-6	Rosa
Student-7	Marina

The participants for this qualitative study were graduating seniors from three independent school districts and one charter school, a total of six schools in the city of study. For purposes of anonymity, the independent school districts will be labeled from A to C and each corresponding high school will be labeled numerically corresponding to each school's district from one to nine as follows: Independent School District (ISD) A, (High School-1-3), ISD B, (High School 4), ISD C, (High School-5), and one charter high school as indicated in Table 3. The majority of students who have previously participated in the program of study have been predominately non-affluent students of Hispanic descent. Because of the success of the program, there has been an increased enrollment in this program from years 1999 to 2008 (See Appendix A).³ The age range of individuals in the study was narrow, from 18 to 19.

Table 3

Identification of Students' School Districts and High Schools

Students' Names	School Districts	High Schools
Lisa	N/A	Charter
Javier	ISD A	High School-1
Katia	ISD A	High School-2
Leonardo	ISD A	High School-3
Alberto	ISD B	High School-4
Rosa	ISD C	High School-5
Marina	N/A	Charter

Note. Independent School District is abbreviated ISD. Non-Applicable (N/A) was placed in the table for the student who attended a charter school without a school district.

Data Collection Instruments

Interviews and the analysis of writing samples were the two methods of data collection for this study.

Interviews

In qualitative research, interviewing is one of the methods of collecting data. According to Fontana and Frey (1994):

Interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings....Interviewing has a wide variety of forms and multiplicity of uses. The most common type of interviewing is individual, face to face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face-to-face group interviewing, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys.

(p. 361)

The interviews may vary between very structured and unstructured. Very structured interviews have a list of questions which have already been thought of ahead of time and unstructured interviews do not have a list of questions and the discussion will focus on several areas (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 100). For this study, I chose a more structured interview for the first interview because I was interested in having the participating students respond to particular questions and the only method of information retrieval would be to ask specific interview questions.

For the second interview, I chose an unstructured interview because I wanted to respond to specific details of the students' overall writing experience. Seidman (1998) mentioned that we have to trust our own instinct about asking "the difficult question" (p. 75) and in many cases, this opportunity is rarely provided for me, as the researcher in this study, and I had to ask some questions that students did not want to fully respond to because of their inexperience as first-time respondents.

Warren (2002) emphasized that the interview is used for meaning making and that in qualitative research, "the purpose of most qualitative interviewing is to derive interpretations, not facts or laws, from respondent talk" (p. 83). The communication exchange between the researcher and the respondents is crucial to the collection of data. "The respondent's obligation is not to manage the encounter or to raise queries, but to offer information from his or her personal cache of experiential knowledge" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 3).

In this research study, I incorporated two interviews: (a) the first was completed at the beginning of the study and (b) the second interview was completed at the end of

the required writing sample submission for each participant. In addition to these two interviews, another source of data collection is documents which can either be presented in “written, oral, visual, and artifact” form (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 100). For the first interview, I created a list of interview questions to address three categories: Background, Personal Reflections of Writing, and Institute of Student Success (IOSS). Each of these areas targeted a specific response from each student participant. The second interview was done after the student participants submitted the writing assignments. The questions for this interview focused on my reading of the writing samples.

For the purposes of the study, I also collected three writing samples: (a) an academic essay (argumentative research paper), (b) a narrative piece, and (c) a reflective response of the overall experience.

Writing Samples

This section begins with a discussion of the narrative and its development towards a focus on narrative analysis. Many people have grown up listening to bedtime stories, stories about their family, home, and friends. When teaching the components of the short story, I stress the importance of all of these shared experiences which reflect a particular moment of history and its primary focus is on the experience of a person (character) or group of individuals (characters) and/or object. The story telling is synonymous to the term narrative and this “attends to the stories and life stories told and how they are occasioned, but also attends to material that is not neatly storied into beginning, middle, or end or that appears incoherent—which can be most of an account”

Phoenix, 2008, p. 65). In the interim of while the story is being told, there may be several other details added to the story to help place the story into the context of what is being revealed for the listener.

It is obvious that all stories require the participation of both the story teller and the listener. “Narrative is the means by which we, both as participants and researchers, shape our understandings and make sense of them” (Josselson, 1995, p. 32). As Josselson (1995) describes the importance of meaning making and understanding what the narrative is trying to tell the audience, it is important to note that one’s creation of narrative reflects the story teller’s personal identity and this identity coexists within the narrator, the individual telling the story, and the listener. “Narrative is how we craft our sense of self, our identity” (Clark & Rossiter, 2008, p. 62).

As a story is told, the narrator makes several choices before narrating the story. Of those choices, he/she can choose the particular topic for the story, how much detail and insight will be shared, and how close does the narrator want to become with the text. It is through all of these decisions that a narrator begins to narrate the story for the listener. Chase (1995) references the complexity of narration when she states, “Narration is a complex social process, a form of social action that embodies the relation between narrator and culture” (p. 2). Chase (1995) references the necessity to study the story and its relation to all of the other parts of the story including the audience and narrator. The narrative (storytelling) has evolved from creation stories of the Bible and Pima and Iroquois indigenous tribes to the famous epics of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the

current narrative research of Medina and Luna's (2000) study of three Latina faculty members' experiences in higher education.

The study's purpose was to learn about these women's life experiences that influenced them to pursue teaching, their daily work at a college, and their self-reflection. The results showed that all three women had experienced a very negative perception of their teachers and environment during their childhood years, and they also had similar experiences with female role models who helped them move forward. In addition, they all agreed that there were varying levels of tokenism in their environment as well. Society is now more than ever "surrounded by narratives of all kinds that embody our cultural values—popular movies and television shows, myths and folklore, religious histories and traditions, social scripts and mores" (Clark & Rossiter, 2008, p. 63).

Webster and Mertova (2007) reference the use of narrative inquiry as a research method that is not only respected but has also transcended across disciplines into other areas that had previously included "empirical methods, such as medicine, the sciences, economics, sociology, politics and others" (p. 24). Narrative Inquiry "is a broad term encompassing the interdisciplinary study of the activities involved in generating and analyzing stories of life experiences (e.g., life histories, narrative interviews, journals, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies) and reporting that kind of research" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 171).

Narrative inquiry helps the researcher understand how the process of narrative analysis will develop. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), through narrative

inquiry, a researcher can select the type of story and/or situation he would like to use for the research study. Both the story selected or the particular situation will merit the experience of the story teller and the personal experience of what is being told either verbally or in written form. Once the researcher has done a narrative inquiry, then he can begin the narrative analysis as defined by Schwandt (2001):

This term refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting the narratives or stories generated in research. It includes formal and structural means of analysis (e.g., examining how a story is organized, how it is developed, and where it begins and ends), functional analyses of what a story is ‘doing’ or what is being told in the story (e.g., telling a moral tale, a cautionary tale, a success story, and a chronicle of trials and tribulations), and analyses of stories as a particular kind of oral performance. (p. 169)

Writing samples were collected of seven students participating in this study and enrolled in a Freshman Composition I course taken during the summer. The participants had been placed into two Freshman Composition I courses taught by the two full-time, Mexican American, female professors.

In this study, the narrative inquiry consisted of the selection of three different writing samples which would be placed within three different rhetorical modes: (a) argumentative, (b) narrative, and (c) descriptive. The first writing sample was written in an argumentative rhetorical mode, the assignment establishing a “for or against” position for students to take concerning writing topics. The second narrative piece collected from respondents asked them to describe a story from their childhood.

All of the writing samples varied in length because the argumentative academic research essay was focused on the topics and requirements given by the two professors. Both instructors incorporated a research essay assignment into their curriculum, and this was the writing sample that was collected from each participant. As the researcher, I had no control on the topic selected for the argumentative academic research essay nor was I permitted to intervene in the topic requirements.

Contrary to the first writing sample of the argumentative academic research essay, with the second writing sample, I had selected the topic for the students to write about. I chose the childhood narrative because I thought it could be reflective of what they had experienced in the past and it would also produce a more emotional connection to the experience because of the remembrance and the possible associations with their surroundings of that particular situation or event that Webster and Mertova (2007) refer to when they state:

The longer time that passes between the event and recall of the event, the more profound the effect of the event has been and the more warranted is the label critical event....Over time, the mind refines and discards unnecessary detail and retains those elements that have been of changing and lasting value....The event is likely to have changed their experience and understanding, informing future behaviour and understanding. (p. 74)

The second writing sample had no time limits, no required length, and no particular focus (e.g. religion, school, holiday, etc.). Each student would take a copy of the written topic given to them after the completion of the first interview and they were allowed to

submit the narrative in person to the office of the IOSS or via email to me. The third writing sample was a more descriptive piece on the students 'overall experience of the writing process and program experience. Some of these students submitted short brief statements while others elaborated with detail. Once again, I made no designated requirements as to length or specific focus since the topic directed to them was broad and I intentionally selected the generalization of this topic so that it would give the students an opportunity to write as much as they could on the topic.

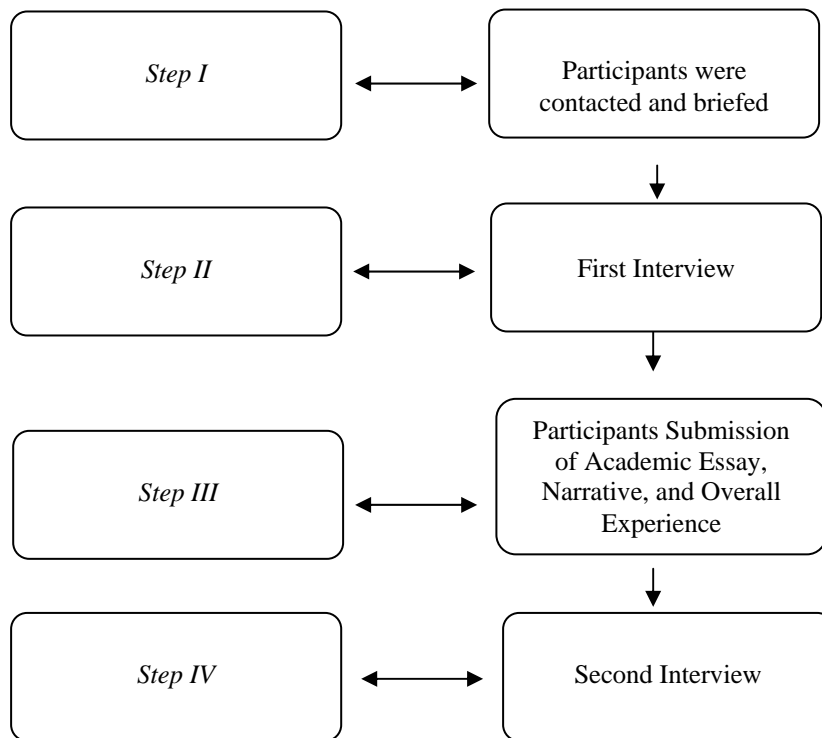
The data analysis for this study will follow Gee's process of discourse analysis. According to Gee, Michaels, and O'Connor (1992), discourse analysis is one of the many methods for doing qualitative research and it enables the researcher to identify the "human experience and, at the same time, constitutes important parts of that experience" (p. 228). Through the use of Gee's analysis for writing sample two, the childhood narrative, I was able to extract the words and phrases that were emphasized by the students' narratives and this method enabled me to locate the relevant themes within the stories. Gee et al. (1992) defined "Thematic organization, which has been much less studied in the various subdisciplines of linguistics than it has been in literary theory, is the way in which images and themes are introduced, contrasted, and developed within a text" (p. 253).

Data Collection Procedures

The two methods of data collected for this research study consisted of face-to-face interviews and analyses of writing samples. For this data collection, I took the

following four steps to collect data once the students were contacted by the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) staff as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Steps in Data Collection



Step I

The first step of the data collection was that the participants were contacted by the staff of the Office of IOSS and invited to participate in a brief meeting to introduce myself and to explain the purpose of the study during the second week of classes. The meeting was held at the office of IOSS. At this brief meeting, I scheduled the first interview and had an opportunity to ask the students questions about any concerns that they may have

with their participation in the study. Seidman (1998) addresses the importance of a personal contact visit when he says, “By taking the time to make a separate contact visit to introduce him-or herself and the study, an interviewer is saying implicitly to the potential participants, ‘You are important. I take you seriously. I respect my work and you enough to want to make a separate trip to meet with you to explain the project’” (p. 40). This experience was useful to both the student participants and to me because it helped us introduce ourselves and discuss some relevant questions that many students who have never participated in a qualitative study would ask; for example, (a) How long will the interview take, (b) How will this help me, (c) Where will the interview take place, and (d) What will be asked?

All of these questions are obvious concerns to both the participant and researcher of any study. Seidman (1998) also notes that it is an important step to selecting participants (p. 40) and this brief meeting with the randomly selected students that were called to meet with me gave me an opportunity to confirm the Mexican origin or Mexican American background of the student because this information was invaluable to the study since it focused on the Mexican American ethnicity. Of those randomly selected students, there were two students who were from another Latino ethnicity and they could not participate in the study.

Step II

The second step in the data collection was that the Office of the IOSS program scheduled the initial one-hour interview with all of the participating students which consisted of interview questions 1-14 (See Appendix C) with only question 11-b (How

did you feel after the program ended?), excluded until after the student's completion in the program. All of the interviews were held in the Office of the IOSS, a location that was very familiar to the participants of the IOSS program because it was the same location where the Offices of the IOSS Coordinator and Off-Site Coordinator are housed.

Prior to beginning the interview, I provided all of the questions for the first interview as well as the consecutive writing exercise both in English and in Spanish, and students selected their language of choice. I am fluent in both spoken and written Spanish, and if the conversation would have transitioned from English to Spanish, I would have been able to understand what the student was saying.

To comply with Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol, each student was provided with an IRB participant form to ensure confidentiality of information and as identified by Seidman's (1998) view on the informed consent, "interviewers can protect themselves against misunderstanding through the process of seeking informed consent, which requires them to be explicit about the range and purpose of their study in a way that makes them clear about what they are doing" (p. 49). The students were also identified with a pseudonym to maintain their anonymity. During the first interview, some students permitted the use of a tape recorder, but others preferred that I take notes.

All interview questions were given to each student to read and to consult throughout the interview process. The interview questions were grouped into three categories: background, personal reflections of writing, and institute of student success. The first category is the background section of the interview. These questions elicit

information about the family history of the respondents. By asking about the place of birth, the researcher sought information about the family's migration from Mexico to the United States. By knowing of the parental educational attainment of the participants, a sense could be obtained of the amount of cultural capital within the family. This section of the interview also asked the students to identify their desired degree, to discuss if they preferred to study alone or in a group environment, and to indicate how they studied, and I did not ask them about their experiences with school at this point because this information would be responded to in their evaluation of the IOSS experience in the interview section.

The second category, personal reflections of writing, asked about the respondents' attitudes toward writing. Students were asked if they enjoyed the writing process or not, and if there were any hindrances or fears associated with writing. By asking these questions about writing in general, I wanted to know the general attitude of the students toward writing. The two other parts to this section asked about the extent to which the respondents accepted a peer review process. The final question in this category asked students to identify difficulties that they may have encountered while writing academic essays.

Questions in the third category inquired about the IOSS program and the students' experiences with the program. The two key questions in this area concentrate on the student's likelihood of attending college without having participated in the program, and about frustrations experienced by the students related to their participation in the program.

Step III

The third step of the data collection required that the students submit three samples of writing, an academic essay/research paper, a narrative piece, and a reflection on their overall writing experience. After the students participated in the first interview, I asked them to submit an academic essay. I also provided them with a follow-up narrative writing exercise that they would complete prior to my contacting them for a second interview.

After the students wrote their academic essay and submitted their work to their instructors in the transitional program, copies of the essays were provided for me to evaluate (See Appendix D).

Step IV

In the fourth step of data collection, a short interview of no more than 30 minutes was conducted to discuss the student's overall writing experience. At this time, I had read all of the writing samples provided by the respondents, and the interview gave me an opportunity to ask the students about the writing samples that they had submitted. As I read through the samples, I wrote down follow-up questions to ask the students. Here, not all of the students received the same questions because only those questions pertinent to a particular respondent were asked of the respondents.

In addition to the two writing samples, some students chose to respond to the question concerning their overall experience in writing. Others chose to answer this particular question in person or on the phone because they could never schedule a time to do an on-campus second interview because of their work and school schedules.

The follow-up interview focused on their response to question 11-b of the interview questions and their experience after completing the IOSS program, it addressed certain aspects of the narrative and it asked about the students' writing experiences (See Appendix F). Furthermore, once the writings of the respondents were collected, analyzed, and coded using Gee's (1985) narrative analysis (See Appendix E), they were categorized according to themes. This four step procedure from the point of initial where the participants were briefed to the first interview and the collection of the writing samples to the end of the second interview lasted an approximate seven months from its commencement in June 2009 to the completion in December of that same year.

Data Analysis

This section of the data analysis will discuss the analysis of two interview sets and three writing samples of seven participants in this study. Data analysis as described by Merriam (1998) "is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 178). For this study, I used a constant comparative approach to compare the themes located in the two data sets of student interviews and writing samples "to determine similarities or differences" (Merriam, 1998, p. 18). As a result, "the overall object of this analysis is to seek patterns in the data" and the constant comparative method enabled me to visualize the thematic patterns which formed through my analysis of the students interviews and writing samples (Merriam, 1998, p. 18).

Analysis of Interviews

The interviews of the participants were transcribed for further analysis. The first interview addressed questions of two types, first, background and personal reflections of writing and the Institute of Student Success (IOSS), and, second, difficulties associated with their writing process (See Appendix C). By collecting data through open-ended questions, I gained information on how students' backgrounds influenced their writing. By asking the students to discuss their writing process, possible cultural influences in their writing may be detected. Students' writing samples were read thoroughly before the students were interviewed a second time.

After the interviews were transcribed, each transcription was placed in order of the students' generation. Afterwards, I placed each individual response of each student's interview question and categorized their responses according to each of the three generations. This provided me with a method to visualize all of the students' responses to one particular question. For this analysis of interviews section of this study, I define theme as a central idea. From this moment, I selected the central theme from each of the questions and began to categorize the students' responses underneath each of the categories. After categorizing all of the themes, I then moved on to categorizing the themes according to the focus of the three research questions which are the following:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?

3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

Analysis of Writing

As mentioned, writing samples consisted of an argumentative research essay assignment, a short narrative piece, and, in some cases, a third piece of writing reflecting the students' overall experience on their writing process, submitted in writing by some students and verbalized by others. Once I collected the writing sample of the narratives, the first thing that I did was to read them twice and then I wrote a brief summary of the narratives before beginning the analysis to ensure that I had read and clearly understood each of the students' narratives and it also provided me with a visual summary of the content for when I had to refer to the narrative pieces.

Summary of Narratives

Lisa, a first generation student, vividly described her experience of discrimination and her "fear of being rejected." In her description, she focused her attention on identifying why the other students would reject her while noting that she did not have the same hair or eye color and considered herself the only "Mexican there." She felt that her rejection was not only from the students, but from the teachers as well. Upon her return to Mexico from Minnesota, she experienced discrimination from the people in Mexico because she mispronounced words in Spanish. She described her struggle of wanting to desperately learn Spanish in her effort to gain acceptance from others. Towards the end of her narrative, she stated that she had matured and understood the importance of culture. She also stated that she attended sixteen different schools during

her grade school years, and this re-emphasized how she struggled to make new friends to wherever she would relocate with her family.

Javier, a second generation student, emphasized his “learning how to speak English.” His narrative centered on his mother’s encouragement to learn to speak English and he indicated that he learned to speak English by watching television shows.

Katia, a first generation student, described her family’s difficult economic circumstances and noted that her family still was happy because they had “love for each other and that is all that matters.” She stated that she did not realize the importance of money until she was much older, but she did understand that her family had sacrificed for each other and that her “mother worked hard to save up to have that party for me.” In the end, she alluded to her “awakening” and realized that family is of great importance.

Leonardo, a second generation student, also described how his parents and two siblings had worked hard to move ahead in life through education and hard work. He also discussed how his father greatly had influenced his life, the family, how he had served as a positive role model, and the strength of his family more generally.

Alberto, a first generation student, reflected on his coming to the US for the first time. His narrative described his family’s arrival into a large city and how he and his sister wanted to sight see and quickly discovered an unfriendly individual who yelled at them as they went to look for their mother. Once he arrived at his grandmother’s house, he noticed that there was a familiar Spanish program on television and he did not feel that it was as different to Mexico. Towards the end of the narrative, he described that the cartoon of “Pokemon” was on television and he was very happy, but then he realized

that the program was in English and he felt upset because he could not understand the language.

Rosa, a second generation student, focused her attention on discrimination in a way similar to first generation student, Lisa's description of her school peers, but in this case, Rosa felt that she was "teased about the color of my skin and the origin of my family." She made a reference that both of her parents were "born in Mexico," and she felt that she could not assimilate to the culture of the United States. She stated that her parents' "culture is extremely diffeetn [different] than American culture. This difference set me apart from most kids surrounding me." She also described how these girls would call her names such as "wetback, nigger, and beaner" and how these derogatory terms were based on her skin color. She described being discriminated by girls who had a similar background to hers; however, she stated that "those girls had brown colored skin but since it was lighter than mine they felt this justified their behavior."

Marina, a third generation student, focused on how she tried "to fit-in with this certain group of kids" and how she started to become a person very different from what she really was. She stated, "I thought that by acting a certain way and doing the things the other kids wanted me to do, it would make them like me." Marina now has "more compassion and admiration for people who are completely themselves." She understood that "it takes courage for people to be who they really are and not worry about what other people will think."

Analysis Based on Gee's Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) is a method for analyzing text and conversation, and its focus is on “the process of communication;” it was used as the analytical framework for the narrative analysis of writing sample two, the childhood narrative (Schwandt, 2001, p. 58). In Gee's (1985) *The Narrativization of Experience in the Oral Style*, the approach is one of “making sense of the experience through narrative.” Gee gives us an opportunity to explore the “stories” of individuals through their words and their understanding of it. Through the use of Gee' analysis, one can explore how words on paper reflect a cultural experience through writing, and eventually, to learn why students need to know and to explore their own culture-laden experiences.

Gee's discourse analysis enables the researcher to analyze themes in various ways: by taking one theme and following it through the entire text, by locating several themes and seeing how they connect, or by identifying themes and demonstrating their disconnection with one another. This method works well when one is trying to locate specific themes in the narrative selection and when one wants to see how themes “fit-together” with the “whole” story. Through the process, themes can be deconstructed into what is significant or not significant in the story's experience and message. Gee's research uses the traditional story plot of exposition, crisis, and denouement to follow the sequence of the story as told through narration. This structure is essential to most story plots, and it assists in analyzing the major components of the story.

Exposition is the point of initiation in which the reader is introduced into the story via several other components, namely, setting, characterization, and atmosphere.

From this exposition, the reader is readily transitioned into the rising action that leads to the moment of crisis/climax, which then leads to the final conclusion of the story. By means of Gee's analysis, one was able to evaluate at what points in the narrative greatest tensions occur, and why they are significant to the entire story. Gee's analytic approach will enable teachers' of writing to explore areas of narrative research beyond traditional forms, and honors the request that "field narratives be more inclusive of historically suppressed groups" (Royster & Williams, 2006, p. 436).

Process of Narrative Analysis

In this narrative analysis, I chose to incorporate Gee's method of discourse analysis to understand the various themes that existed in the students' narrative examples. In Gee's (1999) words,

We speak and write not in English alone but in specific social languages. The utterances of these social languages have meaning--or, at least, the meanings they are, in fact, taken to have—thanks to being embedded in specific social discussions. (p. 46)

As stated in the methodology section, the purpose of identifying themes in the student's text is to give the researcher an opportunity to experience the narrative and to identify thematic similarities and differences as identified in the students' writing samples. Once themes had been determined, I then needed to identify writing patterns connected to their Mexican American culture and how their culture affects the writing process of these first, second, and third generation students of Mexican origin.

The first step in initiating this analysis commenced with a re-reading of the text and a re-positioning of the student's words into a column form. Essentially the repositioning of the text enabled the deconstruction of the paragraph and the selection of significant words within the narrative. Below, I repositioned the text and placed the words of the narratives into separate sections of the page. By focusing my attention on the words that could be overlooked in the initial reading of the text, I was able to study the narrative more clearly. I then highlighted central ideas in the text. Next, I re-read the highlighted areas, made note of not only certain words and phrases, but also wrote my understanding of the text.

I chose to use the themes extracted from my reading of the student's writing experiences to evaluate their connections to cultural and social capital. A dictionary definition of theme is "a unifying or dominant idea, motif, etc." (Dictionary.com). For this narrative analysis of the study, I defined a theme as a central idea that is connected in some form to a person's traditions, beliefs, and norms. The idea of connectiveness has also been described by Spradley (1980) who defined a cultural theme in *Participant Observation* as "any principle in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (p. 141).

For Spradley, in an ethnographic approach to research, a culture is reflective upon a group's actions and communication with each other, yet he believes "it is important to go beyond such an inventory to discover the cultural themes that a society's members have learned and use to connect these domains" (p. 140). Understanding the themes of these student participants is relevant to how these students still connect to

their culture and to what degree. Finally, the themes that were identified throughout each student's narratives were studied as a method to understand how these themes "fit together" (Gee, 1985) into the whole experience. Lisa's childhood narrative which is studied in depth here was presented earlier as the first example of writing sample 2 and in Appendix E. At this point, I begin a discourse analysis and the first step is to reposition the narrative into a column form.

Discourse Analysis using Gee's Methodology

Lisa's Narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

1. Write about a childhood experience.

One of the things
i can recall
from my childhood
is the fear
of being rejected.
I lived in
Minnesota
for few years
and went to
school there
as well
for some of my
elementary years.
It was hard
for me
trying to
blend in
and be like
everyone else,
because i was
the only Mexican
there.
The students
would see me
different
due to
my skin
color

and my eyes
were not
color like them.
my hair
wasnt
as shiny
and light
as their
beautiful
blond shades.
i felt the
discrimination
with
the same
teachers and
their was a poing
in my life
when i no longer
wanted to go
to school.
We later
moved back
to Mexico
where
i though
things
woud change
but to my luck

it didnt.
 I didnt perfectly
 speak
 spanish
 due to the
 many years
 living
 in the U.S ;
 i had to be
 moved
 from the
 third level grade
 i was into
 a first grade class
 where they
 had to teach me
 how to speak
 spanish
 from the
 beginigh.
 Student
 would make
 fun of me
 and say
 i was dump
 because
 i was mexican
 and didn't
 even know
 spanish.
 i started to feel
 like i didn't
 belong
 any where
 and i
 couldnt blend in
 with my own people.
 That same year
 with hard effort
 i learned all i
 could
 and starated
 speaking more
 spanish ,

i didnt really
 cared if i
 forgot
 how to speak
 inglish
 as long as
 they would
 accept me.
 I stayed for
 the next year
 of fourth grade
 in which
 i had made
 new friends,
 and met
 more family
 i didnt know
 i had.
 As i grew
 Older
 i mature
 and i
 learn that
 there are many
 cultures and
 that i shouldn't
 feel bad
 instead
 i should be
 thankfull
 that i could learn
 from past experience
 and appreciate
 life more.
 I learn
 to interact
 with diffrent
 people, kids
 and adults
 due to the
 diffrent changes
 i went through.
 I have been to
 sixteen

different school
and i
have made
friends and known
the differnt
personalities
there is
and i
shouldnt
just stick
to one
kinda of
person to be
their friend
but be friends
with
varieties
of people.

Discourse Analysis using Gee's Methodology

Lisa's Narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Highlighting Areas of the Text

1. Write about a childhood experience.

One of the things
i can recall
from my childhood
is the **fear**
of being rejected.
I lived in
Minnesota
for few years
and went to
school there
as well
for some of my
elementry years.
It was hard
for me
trying to
blend in
and **be like**
everyone else,
because i was
the only **Mexican**
there.
The students
would see me
different
due to
my skin
color
and my eyes
were not
color like them.
my **hair**
wasnt
as **shiny**
and **light**
as their
beautiful
blond shades.
i felt the

discrimination
with
the same
teachers and
their was a poing
in my life
when i no longer
wanted to go
to school.
We later
moved back
to Mexico
where
i though
things
woud change
but to my **luck**
it didnt.
I didnt perfectly
speak
spanish
due to the
many years
living
in the U.S ;
i had to be
moved
from the
third level grade
i was into
a first grade class
where they
had to teach me
how to speak
spanish
from the
beginigh.
Student
would make

fun of me
 and say
 i was **dump**
 because
 i was mexican
 and **didn't**
even know
spanish.
 i started to feel
like i didn't
belong
any where
and i
 couldnt **blend in**
with my own people.
That same year
with hard effort
i learned all i
could
and starated
speaking more
spanish ,
i didnt really
cared if i
forgot
how to speak
inglish
as long as
they would
accept me.
 I stayed for
 the next year
 of fourth grade
 in which
i had made
new friends,
and met
 more family
 i didnt know
 i had.
 As i grew
 Older
 i mature
 and i

learn that
 there are many
 cultures and
that i shouldn't
 feel bad
 instead
 i should be
 thankfull
 that i could learn
 from past experience
 and appreciate
 life more.
 I learn
 to interact
with diffrent
people, kids
and adults
due to the
diffrent changes
 i went through.
I have been to
sixteen
different school
 and i
 have made
 friends and known
 the differnt
 personalities
 there is
 and i
 shouldnt
just stick
to one
kinda of
person to be
 their friend
 but be friends
with
varieties
of people.

After this procedure was done with the text, I began to read through the highlighted material and circled those words excluding articles (e.g. I, the, an, etc.) that were either repeated for emphasis or just focused on one particular example. After the list was completed, I then began to categorize the words into larger categories as focused on my three research questions.

Once the writing samples were submitted and the narratives analyzed according to Gee's analytical frame, I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) Conceptually Clustered Matrix description to organize the themes and their relation to the student participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) define the conceptually clustered matrix as the following:

A conceptually clustered matrix has its rows and columns arranged to bring together items that 'belong together.' This outcome can happen in two ways: *conceptual*—the analyst may have some a priori ideas about items that derive from the same theory or relate to the same overarching theme; or *empirical*—during early analysis you may find that informants answering different questions are tying them together or are giving similar responses. The basic principle, however is conceptual coherence. (p. 127)

My conceptual clustered matrix positioned the student participants on the left hand side column and the themes were positioned across the top row. From this moment on, I incorporated the conceptual clustered matrices and began to sort through all of the themes identified per student and per generation and began to compare the results with each generation and with each set of themes which were those collected from both the interviews and the writing samples.

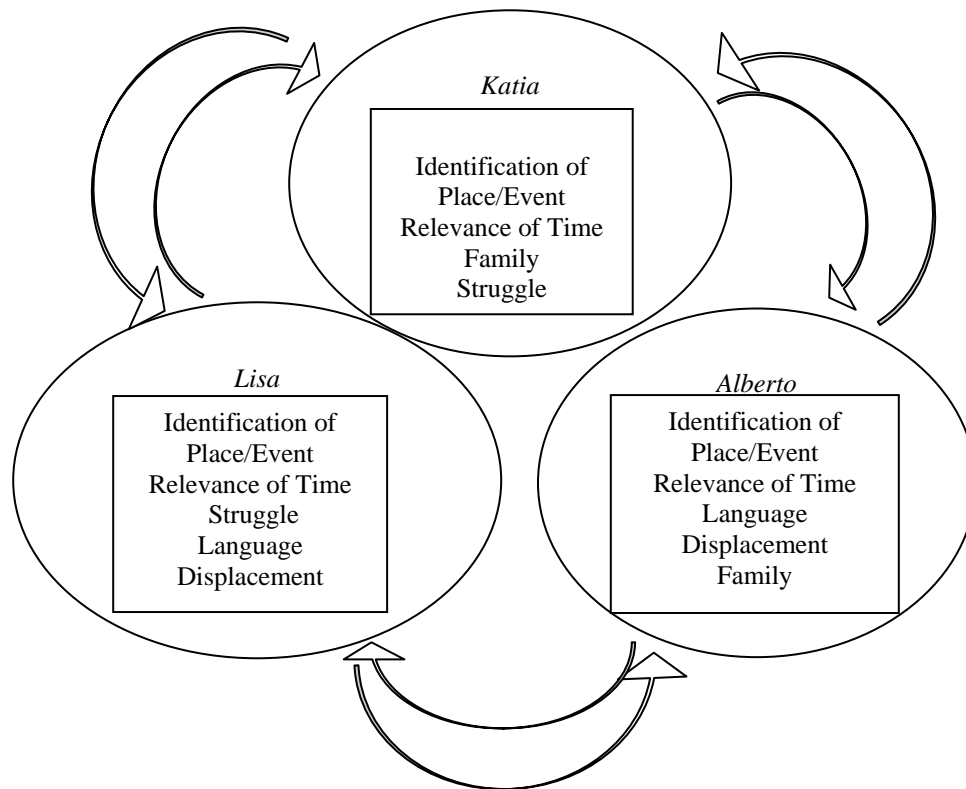
General Themes Identified in All Three Generations

After reading the list of themes for each student's narrative sample, I then categorized similar themes into more general themes. This helped me create a shorter list of themes to work with when selecting the final list of repeated themes found in each of the three generations. Figure B1 located in Appendix B identified these general themes with their subgroups listed underneath. The general themes that I developed from the narratives were migration, fear, avoidance, learning another culture, family, identity, and discrimination.

Recurrence of Themes Identified by Generation

Here, instead of considering narrative themes across generations, I examined themes within each generation. The recurring themes mentioned by first generation students are identified in Figure 2 and they were identification of place, relevance of time, family, struggle, language, and displacement. Unfortunately, the third generation participant could not be compared to others in the same generation because there was only one third generation participant, and it was not possible to look at themes from more than one third generation student.

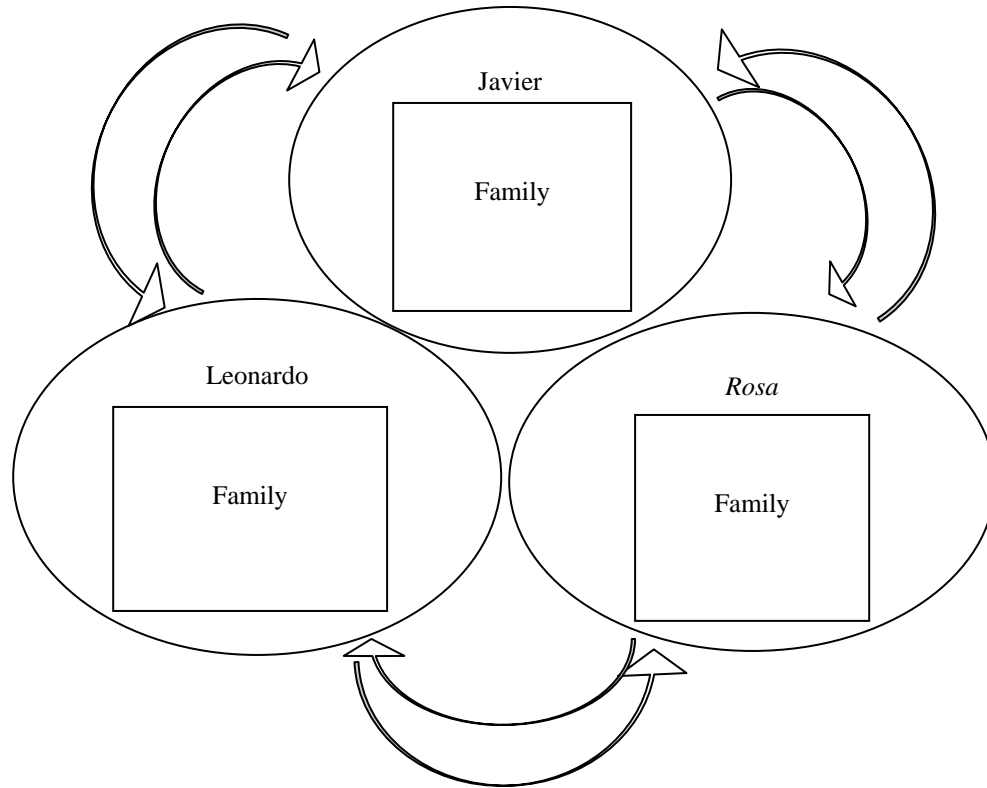
Figure 2
First Generation Recurring Themes



Note. Identifies the similar themes between all three first generation participants.

Family was the only recurring theme identified in the second generation group of students as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Second Generation Recurring Themes



Note. Identifies the similar themes between all three second generation participants.

Recurrence of Themes Identified in All of the Three Generations

Figures B2-B4 located in Appendix B identify the number of times each theme was repeated in each of the generations. After all of the themes were read for repetition in each of the three generations, I selected those themes that had recurred in all three generations. Six prevalent themes were identified in this study and they are indicated in Figure B5 located in Appendix B. Of the numerous themes identified in all three

generations, (1) identification of place, (2) relevance of time, (3) understanding, (4) identity, (5) criticism, and (6) learning process were the six repeated themes found in the responses of all three generational groups. As previously mentioned, identity, criticism, and understanding already have been listed as general themes. The final step of the data analysis was to collapse the data from the two data sets which include the interviews and writing samples and list the emergent themes for Chapter IV which discusses the findings.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Merriam and Simpson (1995) state that “Reality is constructed by individuals. Thus, in qualitative research, the understanding of reality is really the researcher’s interpretation of someone else’s interpretation” (pp. 101-102). Consequently, my interpretations of this research led me to ask interview questions which focused on the students’ background, writing process, and transitional experience. For this study, a member check was used to review interview questions as well as to verify the findings of the study, and I solicited peer debriefings from two professors of English.

One reviewer is a community college professor who has been teaching for more than twenty-five years. The second peer reviewer is a professor at a university who has been teaching for thirty-two years. During the summer of 2009, I had an opportunity to visit with the both of them and to ask them if they would agree to study the data that would be sent to them at the end of the fall semester. Both agreed, and each reviewer was given a complete data set from three participants, numbers 5, 6, and 7 (Alberto, Rosa, and Marina). The data set included the first and second interviews, as well as the

three writing samples of each of three students identified by generation. The college professor's reading of the text identified a similar theme of the learning experience, but she identified two other themes which were not on my list, and they included assimilating into a group and resentment. For assimilating into a group, she stated that Marina "was trying too hard to fit into a group, not knowing what she wanted for herself. The student seemed afraid of being scorned." For resentment, the college professor referenced Alberto's bitter self-identification, as she said, "While watching TV, the cartoon did not make him feel comfortable because his favorite character spoke a language he did not understand." Any theme that could be related to emotional perception is difficult to analyze because it is a combination of the individual's internal perception and feelings of expression during that particular moment. For Marina, being accepted into a group is one of the many experiences a young girl encounters, especially after moving from an elementary school age environment into a middle school age environment.

The university professor's psychological reading of the text identified some of the general themes similar to those that I found. These included the themes of recognition of fear, identity, and acceptance. Yet, the only differentiation was the professor's reference to student number 7 (Marina) as having been raped and stated, "Her writing might be 'raped.'" Therefore, it is clear that member checking helped me evaluate my own analysis of themes collected in the writing because both professors and I used different types of analysis for the writing.

With member checking Leonardo, Alberto, Rosa, and Marina's transcribed interviews and completed writing samples used in this research, I was able to ensure that the data collected would give others an opportunity to confirm the findings using a different method. In effect, there were four member reviews completed with four student participants, Leonardo, Alberto, Rosa, and Marina. For purposes of clarification of the data, I originally asked students to confirm that the transcriptions that I had written from their responses were correct and to review if it was exactly what they meant to say in response to the interview questions and overall experience. Accordingly, a "member check" process, whereby qualitative data is analyzed by more than one researcher, addresses the potential bias of a single researcher analyzing qualitative data (Merriam, 1998, p. 205).

The study could probably later be replicated and a larger size sample could be used for purposes of extending to a greater level of responses. The results of the study would not be exactly the same on the students' interview questions focusing on the writing process; but in reference to the interview questions focusing on the IOSS program, they would have some degree of similarity. As Merriam and Simpson (1995) state, "Replication of the qualitative study will not yield the same results but this does not discredit the results of any particular study; there can be numerous interpretations of the same data" (p. 102).

Summary

This chapter presented the design and methodological approach used in this study. The role of the researcher was discussed as well as the site and participant

selection of the study. A basic interpretive qualitative framework was used for the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), “Qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is twofold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter, and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of positivism” (p. 4).

The research elements used for the purpose of the study were interviews and writing samples. Initially, my intent was to interpret the interviews and writing samples of the student participants in the IOSS program in an effort to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students’ culture had on their writing. It is apparent that this type of methodology would be used to help me understand the experiences of the other individuals in this study. “Thinking about an inquiry in narrative terms allows us to conceptualize the inquiry experience as a storied one on several levels” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 418). Thus, I incorporated Miles and Huberman’s (1994) conceptually clustered matrix to assist me in categorizing the relevant themes focused on the research questions of this study.

In addition, I incorporated Gee’s (1985) method of deconstruction of the text as the analytical frame for the reading of the childhood narratives. All of these various methodological tools enabled me to better comprehend the data collected and to carefully separate the true meaning and experience of each individual represented in this study. Furthermore, Chapter IV will address the findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

As previously stated in Chapter I, the main purpose of this study was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing. In this chapter, I will first present a brief summary of the methodology used for this study; secondly, I will describe a history of the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) program to better understand the purpose of the IOSS Program and the benefits that it provides the participating students. Next, I intend to give a description of the participants and their demographic profile as related to some of the interview responses. Finally, I present the results of this study as taken from the data analyzed in Chapter III, which was collapsed into the common themes from the two data sets of interviews and writing samples. The themes focused on the three research questions directed in this study:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?
3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

History and Description of Program

The Institute of Student Success (IOSS) is a transitioning high school to college program for students, sponsored by the aforementioned college in the Southwest. The Dean of the IOSS, and the Chair of the Political Science Department at the College jointly formulated the approach of the program, namely, to facilitate the transition of students from high school to college. The Dean's concern was that a large number of inner-city students are not going to college. The chair of the Political Science Department's primary concern was that some of the area high schools were still in session when the first summer session at the college level had already begun, making it impossible for graduating high school students to enroll or attend for the first summer session.

The program began in 1999 with "a specially designed session [starting] a week after the regular summer session at the college has begun" (Flores, 2005). According to Manuel Gonzalez, III, the Off-Site Coordinator of IOSS, "The IOSS starts a week after the regular session to accommodate the high school graduation ceremonies and the use of a different date to begin the program re-emphasizes its uniqueness as a separate entity" (2005). The participants are recent high school graduates, and primarily at-risk or first-generation college students. According to the IOSS statistics derived from the summer 2005, "The average high school G.P.A. was a 2.05 G.P.A., and we offer mostly remedial reading, remedial math, remedial English and English composition, American history, sociology, and student development" (Flores, 2005).

The IOSS started with a cohort of 114 students who attended local high schools with a majority of Hispanic students. The program has grown extensively on a year-to-year basis; and last year (2008), there was an enrollment of 210 participants. The mission of the program is to transition recent high school graduates into their first college experience through mentoring and guidance.

The college has created a program unlike many other retention-based programs that focus on the transition of students from high school to college. This program readily enables a student to receive college credit for coursework completed during the summer semester prior to the fall semester enrollment. The students are encouraged to enroll in two classes, for six hours of credit; and as a requirement, each student must apply for financial assistance for the summer. If the student is ineligible for financial aid which consists of a Pell grant and other grants, the student is awarded a scholarship of \$450.00 to cover tuition and fees for the program. By participating in the transitional program, students receive assistance from counselors, orientation, and given an opportunity to explore college life with the benefits of a support group.

Demographic Profile of Participants and Their Families

It was important for me to develop an understanding of the students' backgrounds and culture by asking them to identify their relationships to Mexico. Using standard sociological generational classification, I asked them to identify if they were first, second, or third generation Mexican Americans, resulting in the classification used to list their names. It is understood that first generation individuals are born in Mexico, second generation persons are born in the US, of parents born in Mexico, and third

generation Mexican Americans are individuals born in the US, of US born parents of Mexican Heritage. Question two of the interview stated, “Are you a first, second, or third generation Mexican American student?” For purposes of accuracy, students’ responses to all of the interview questions and writing samples identified in this chapter are the exact words of the students’ and/or field notes as identified in Appendix C.

According to their responses to question two of the interview, three students were first generation, three were second generation, and one was third generation Mexican American. This information assisted me in understanding that the majority of the students already had some connection to culture and customs of the United States. The three students, though, who identified themselves as first generation Mexican American students had a much stronger connection to the culture of Mexico, as reflected in their writings.

In an effort to understand the students’ familial educational background, as indicated in Table 4, the first generation group identified their parents’ educational level as some high school and some college. Lisa indicated that her father had completed 9th grade and that her mother had completed 10th grade; while Katia’s mother had completed some college, her father had only completed the 10th grade. Alberto stated that his mother had completed high school but that his father had not.

The second generation group identified their parents’ educational level within grade school to middle school, which was the group that contained less schooling compared to generations 1 and 3, where some parents had completed some high school and college. Javier mentioned that both of his parents had only completed grade school.

Leonardo's parents had completed middle school only, and Rosa stated that her parents had only completed elementary school. Marina, the only third generation student in the group, related her parents' level of education as having attained some college.

Since Katia and Marina's parents' had experienced some connection with higher education at some point in their lives, these two students were more than likely to show a similar experience because of their parental influence and example of having attended college.

Table 4

Identification of Students' Parents' Level of Education by Generation

Identification of Parents' Level of Education		
Students' Names	Mother	Father
<i>First Generation</i>		
Lisa	10 th grade in High School	9 th grade in High School
Katia	Some College	10 th grade High School
Alberto	Completed High School	4th grade in Elementary School
<i>Second Generation</i>		
Javier	Grade School	Grade School
Leonardo	Middle School	Middle School
Rosa	Elementary School	Elementary School
<i>Third Generation</i>		
Marina	Some College	Some College

Note. In Mexico, *primaria* indicates schooling from kindergarten to sixth grade. In this table, the second generation students refer to *primaria* as grade school and elementary school. For purposes of accuracy, the exact term that the respondents used, either "grade school" or "elementary school," is indicated in the table, although most likely, they indicate the same amount of schooling.

As previously referenced in the literature review, cultural capital is the acquired background that a person is given by the family, enabling the individual to perform well in school or other environments. The relationship of cultural capital and the following collected themes from the interview exhibit the connection of how the students' learning and perspective of education was viewed within their family environment. Each individual is taught an appreciation and love for learning at an early age by the parental figure. In the following sections one can begin to understand the importance of how much cultural capital was accumulated by the individual through the students' responses. From the interviews, the themes that supported the importance of cultural capital in a transitional program include study preferences/habits, value placed on higher education, expectations of IOSS program, likelihood of college attendance, writing process, writing difficulties, and recognition of assignment difficulty, and parental influence.

Themes

Study Preferences/Habits

Study preferences/habits were identified to try to understand how prepared these students are for their college experiences. Since the study habits students learn in school and at home are taught by teachers and/or parents at an early age, these skills are used by students to prepare for reviews and examinations. In an effort to understand the students' study habits, it is important to address the personality traits of the students. First generation students, Lisa, Katia, and Alberto all studied individually; Katia and Alberto indicated that they spend at least one to two hours daily studying. Katia said, "I study alone and spend about one to two hours and then I get tutoring from teachers." Lisa

preferred to study at the library to avoid distractions while working on her assignments, and she narrated:

Ummm, basically after I get out of class, I go to the library and I go over my notes okay, and then I go home and I go over the homework and on my computer if I have to do research to understand something I research it, and study sometimes, it's hard concentrating, but I still try to study....

Ummm, I think it's in campus it's a little bit better because the library is more quiet and it's relaxing and at home it's a little bit hard cause there's things going around and my brother's not quiet...not quiet...so but it's a little bit noisy... yeah and I'm really distracted a lot.

Second generation students, Javier, Leonardo, and Rosa, studied from one to two hours per day, and Rosa, in particular, read "the books and notes." Javier preferred to organize his work. Third generation student, Marina, reviewed and studied her work.

Concerning the question that focused on study preferences, about one half of the students preferred to work individually, while the other one half preferred to work in groups. Lisa mentioned that she preferred to work both alone or in a group when she stated:

Ummm, it depends on the subject, but I like working in groups can I get other ideas and explain I if I don't get something I can ask questions with them and it kind of helps me understand what is going on a little bit more.

It is obvious that many of these participants realize the importance of studying on a continual basis, but there were some students who found it difficult to study because of the various distractions that occur at home. Lisa's example indicated that she had difficulty studying at home because of the noise and other distractions, emphasizing how much her family environment inhibited her from studying. She admits that she would much rather go to the library "because the library is more quiet and it's relaxing." Some of the students believed that working in groups could help them exchange their ideas with others; and at the same time, they could review the material with others to ensure that they understood the particular assignment.

Value Placed on Higher Education

I identified the students' value placed on higher education by asking the students what type of education they planned to pursue as a career goal, which included the kind of degree that they wanted, and if they saw themselves pursuing graduate work and attaining a graduate degree. This concept, of course, stems out of the notion that if the child is provided with sufficient cultural capital, he or she will desire to acquire more education even if his or her parents' did not complete several levels of schooling.

Just like Rosa, who stated, "I want to be a registered nurse and receive a bachelor's degree," and Alberto, who said he wanted, "a bachelor's degree in biology, I want to be an orthodontist," the remaining students identified the following types of majors and degrees: journalism, electrical engineering, accounting, ultrasonography, and medicine. There were two designations for two Associate's of Arts Degree, three for a

Bachelor's Degree, one for a Master's Degree, and two professional degrees as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5
Identification of Future Degree Attainment

Student's Names	Identification of Future Degree Attainment
<i>First Generation</i>	
Lisa	MA in Ultrasonography
Katia	AA in Accounting
Alberto	Orthodontist, BA in Biology
<i>Second Generation</i>	
Javier	BA in Biology, Medical School
Leonardo	AA in Electrical Engineering
Rosa	BA in Nursing
<i>Third Generation</i>	
Marina	BA in Journalism

All of the students acknowledged that they wanted to pursue an education and earn a degree. Each student desired to make a much better life for himself. Some of the students were inspired by their parents words of advice or their friends; while others, who witnessed the level of hardship that their parents experienced, such as Javier, Leonardo, and Rosa's parents', realized that they wanted a better life for themselves. Rosa's internal motivation was drawn from her young daughter and Rosa's desire to provide another lifestyle for her daughter. Thus, this knowledge and desire is attributed to the acquisition of cultural capital.

Expectations of IOSS Program

The final section of the interview questions (See Appendix C) focused its attention to the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) program. Questions included the following: (a) how the students' felt prior to the commencement of the program; program participation and the participants' recommendation of the program; (b) the likelihood of attending college; and (c) the frustrations experienced in the students' participation in the IOSS. Each student participant had certain expectations coming into this transitional program; some of these expectations were influenced by their school, their home, and the office of IOSS.

First generation students, Lisa, Katia, and Alberto's, initial evaluations of the IOSS program were all very positive. Lisa said that she....“was expecting it to be kinda more harder than high school,” and she thought, “It’s actually easier because there’s a lot of tutors here that they help you out.” Katia referenced that it was a good experience to see the differences between high school and college. In much the same way, Alberto, like Lisa, emphasized the ease of the transition, when he stated, “I didn’t expect it to be so easy...since I always expected college to be a little harder...that’s what they usually told me.”

Second generation students, Javier, Leonardo, and Rosa also evaluated the IOSS program positively. The students felt that the IOSS program gave them an opportunity to learn during the semester. Javier mentioned that his participation in the program helped him get ahead. Leonardo stated:

I thought it was worth it, I got to have classes under my belt and right straight out

of high school so I was kind of used to the motion of school and everything so I'm kind of prepared for it.

Rosa indicated that her experience “was more like high school.”

Third generation student, Marina's, comments about her initial expectations were very different than the others, when she stated, “I really didn't have any expectations, I knew it was going to be kind of hard.” All the students realized that their experience in the program had been positive, and it had also given them an opportunity to receive credit for their coursework. Many of these students actually commented that they had expected the program to be more difficult, yet they were glad that they had participated because it would help them anticipate what they would expect in the fall semester as they continued with their studies. The students' high schools provided the students with an opportunity to register in the program and to discuss any concerns with the IOSS staff that provided workshops for both the parents and the students. The students' home environment was influential towards the students' participation in the program because the IOSS program reached out to the students and their parents, and it also provided a degree of financial security for the students' families, since the students would be granted money for college. Thus, the students saw this as an opportunity for them, and they were glad to have participated in the program. As a result, the IOSS program was another favorable circumstance to obtain cultural capital.

Likelihood of College Attendance

The program's theme does emphasize a connection to the students' parental

influence and level of education. Students were asked about the likelihood of attending college had they not participated in the IOSS program and first generation student, Lisa, mentioned:

I would of ummm, applied for fall, but before this didn't think I was going to college right after graduation and I actually wanted to have a some time to rest and then go again and return, but it would take a little bit longer. I don't think it would have been as constant as it is going to be now.

Katia and Alberto, first generation students, confirmed the likelihood of attending college in the fall semester. The second generation students all agreed that they would continue with college; and particularly, Javier and Rosa stated that they too would attend in the fall semester. Marina, the third generation student, mentioned that she "would have gone to college."

All of the students clearly emphasized their decisions to go to college even if they had not participated in the program, but Lisa indicated that she would have preferred to take a break from school and then continue. However, by not going to school immediately after graduating from high school, it might definitely make it a very difficult situation for a student who would then get used to the non-academic environment or the possibility of choosing between going to school and going to work. From personal experience, many students prefer to work to economically help their family or to establish their own economic independence. In addition, when a family does not have the economic resources to help the children by providing the necessary

finances to pay for their education, the determined students must rely on their own hard work and perseverance to stay in college and succeed.

Parental Influence

Just like the likelihood of attending college and attaining a degree are important characteristics of a student's motivation for staying in school, the student's parental influence is invaluable to a student who wants to pursue an education. In fact, the majority of the students indicated that either one or both parents had influenced them. The first generation group stated that their parents had definitely influenced them to attend college. Lisa said, "My dad has pursued me to reach my goals and to just keep going forward and I have the opportunity that he never had so it's just that basically that he reminds me every morning." Katia stated, that her parents reminded her about it everyday, and she mentioned, "I have church support too." Alberto's parents also regularly encouraged him.

Interestingly, the three first generation respondents were reminded on a daily basis, and this prompting indicated that their parents' want their teenagers to have much greater opportunities for their future than they had. In the second generation group, one student, Javier, was also advised about going to college. He mentioned that his mother always reminded him; and since his father had been absent for the majority of his life, it was his mother's desire that Javier attend college. He said, "So that I can have more in life." Leonardo's father was also an influential motivation for him to attend college because his father always reminded Leonardo that "If I could have had an education".... his life would have been much better. Rosa mentioned that she was inspired by her five-

year old daughter, and she said, “She is the reason why I want to succeed.” Marina, the third generation student, mentioned, “My parents have encouraged me very often.”

It is clear that the students’ parents did influence their children’s decision to pursue an education, and it is clear that the first generation parents used their own life experiences to stress the importance of attaining a better life through education. The students’ parents’ influence on their children’s future is an example of the cultural capital that is provided within a family. For students’ whose parents have received a higher education or have knowledge of the benefits of attaining a degree, the students are not only motivated to pursue an educational goal, but they are also supported with this endeavor. As a result, the parents begin to seek additional cultural capital that their children need to move forward.

Consequently, the academic writing topics focused on the students’ ability to incorporate their research skills gathering facts to support their argumentative paper. The students’ complete research papers are located in Appendix D. While the topics varied, the issues included domestic violence, drug legalization, the transition from high school to college, problems faced by college students, the war in Afghanistan, and terrorism. For this section, I arranged students’ papers in two ways: 1) Topics directly related to the lives of the students, and 2) Topics indirectly related to the students as indicated by Table 6.

Table 6

Title of Students' Research Paper Topic

Student's Names	Directly Related Topics to Students
<i>1st Generation</i>	
Lisa	Terrorism
Katia	Recognizing Domestic Violence
Alberto	New Life (Transition of High School to College)
<i>2nd Generation</i>	
Javier	The War in Afghanistan
Leonardo	College Students' Problems
Rosa	Overcoming Single Parenthood Dilemma
<i>3rd Generation</i>	
Marina	Drug Legalization

Note. This researcher identified the title of Lisa's research paper as Terrorism, since she titled her paper, "Term Paper."

Out of all of the argumentative research papers, only three research papers directly focused on the research questions. Topics that indirectly related to the student included subjects such as terrorism, war, and drugs. Controlled topics, more directly related to the students lives were evident in the writing process of first generation student, Katia's, personal experience with domestic violence. She stated, "Three years ago, when I was fifteen, I experienced domestic violence. I was in a violent relationship from day one. He never respected me and always made me feel as if I were not worth a thing." Katia described her abusive relationship with her boyfriend, stating, that he "...would come from work annoyed and he would take his anger out on me."

Her concluding statements in this paragraph mention that she made the decision to leave him and that she "realized that I [she] was better than him." Her argument

explains how other women have undergone the similar experiences, yet she defends her effort by analyzing the causes of the abusive relationship, while substantiating the growing concern of domestic violence in relationships through the use of statistical data. The second writing sample submitted by students was a childhood narrative. Ochs and Capps (1996) define personal narratives in this way: “Personal narratives shape how we attend to and feel about events. They are partial representations and evocations of the world as we know it” (p. 21). My intent was to examine the differences between an academic research writing assignment and a more personal reflective piece of student writing.

Regarding the purpose of the narrative, I did not require any specific length. The participants were simply asked to write about a personal childhood experience. Several students decided to write about a cultural experience related to their family background. All of the childhood narratives were categorized with a connection to culture capital and the Mexican American culture’s influence on writing. The complete narratives are located in Appendix E. Writing process, writing difficulties, and recognition of assignment difficulty are the themes that were drawn out from the interviews that supported the importance of cultural capital in a transitional program.

Writing Process

In academia, an effective writing skill is used in almost every discipline. Hence, writing introduced in a Freshman Composition I course emphasizes the various rhetorical modes in coordination with reading essays. Students who are academically prepared usually have strong reading and writing skills. Those students who encounter

challenges with their writing are often categorized with weak reading and writing skills. In this section, I identify four key questions about personal reflections of writing and begin by asking the participants the following: (a) Do you enjoy writing/Do you fear writing, (b) Describe your writing process: from brainstorming to editing, (c) Do you engage in peer review of the writing of others, and (d) What are the difficulties that you encounter or struggle with while writing an essay?

The same number of students indicated that they enjoyed writing as those who said they did not. It is evident that the students who enjoyed writing chose majors and declared career interests related to writing. Marina, the third generation student, would like to study journalism, and she felt very connected to writing. Lisa, a first generation student, mentioned that she enjoyed writing; and even though she does not believe she is a good writer, she continues to do her best.

Those students who feared writing were more apt to respond to the question about writing by stating the reasons they did not enjoy writing. Rosa, a second generation student, mentioned that she had the ideas in her head, but it would take a long time to write them down on paper. Interestingly, she also commented that she did not know what the teacher was expecting of her with regards to writing. Leonardo, a second generation student, also attested to the amount of time it took to write, and Katia, a first generation student, discussed the fact that she had trouble with the structure of the writing process.

In effect, the students' responses to their writing helped me to understand how they developed their drafts because it is obvious to note that those students who are

interested in writing will enjoy the writing process of developing a draft from the beginning of the brainstorming process to the final revisionary step. Since I identified the students by generation, it is understood that some of these students' first language was English; while for others, it was Spanish. It is also apparent that the third generation student in our sample, Marina, possessed a much greater degree of cultural capital than the first and second generation students. She had acquired knowledge through her family environment and school, having had the opportunity to assimilate to the cultural norms of the United States.

From my point of view, even though there are generational differences between the students, there are also specific similarities in writing processes across generations. These processes include writing an outline for organizational purposes by generation and drafting one paragraph at a time rather than writing a complete rough draft of the paper all at once. For example, Lisa began her writing process by creating a topic outline as indicated in her response:

Ummm....Whenever I get a topic I first ummm make an outline I put the intro, the three paragraphs for the body and the conclusion I usually put ummm.... how many sentences I am going to use next to it and I number them and to have an idea what I am gonna write. I put questions next to it and then according to the questions I write sentences and but then I try to calculate the words I'm gonna have to need. I then go over it read the whole thing, and if I see that it doesn't make sense or if its kind of awkward I fix it punctuate it and check the misspellings. So I type it

up.

She divided the outline according to the traditional five paragraph essay, an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Next, she wrote a series of questions, then responded to each question with a specific number of sentences, paying particular attention to create an equal number of sentences throughout each section. Next, she completed her writing process by combining the individual sentences into paragraphs. Therefore, she used a linear approach to focus on her topic and organized her purpose.

Similarly, Javier, a second generation student, described his writing process accordingly. “I study the topic and repeat it in my mind, I collect data, and write an outline and then I give my opinion on the writing, and I write a rough draft.”

Consequently, first generation students, Lisa and Alberto, and second generation student, Javier, similarly use an outline as a part of their writing process. Alberto said, “I like to brainstorm ideas. I write an outline, a rough draft, one paragraph at a time, and then I correct, and I also use peer review.” By focusing on the outline the organizational method for their writing, these students learned to write by following the traditional writing method. The common trait that these students have in writing one paragraph at a time and correcting it before moving onto the other paragraph is a very linear concept. While most students create a rough draft of their essay first and then they move onto the revisionary work, these particular students seem to be more task oriented. In fact, the revisionary and completion process can sometimes be difficult for students who are not used to taking essay exams and are having to complete an assignment within a specific time in class. Thus, students who are not used to the research paper writing component,

require quite a bit of additional revisionary work integrating the research material accurately within the essay.

Writing Difficulties

Obviously, many students struggle with the writing process, especially those not accustomed to writing. Therefore, the similarities among first generation students, indicated that all struggled with the basic construction of the essay, in particular with maintaining their focus in writing. Second generation grappled with writing introductions, including writing a beginning that is effectively incorporated in the thesis. Also, maintaining a focus in their essay was problematic. Marina, the third generation student, noted that she regularly had trouble with the organization of an essay.

The process that Marina utilized also referenced the basic construction of an essay in which ideas are organized mentally before writing them down. At the beginning of the writing process, a brainstorming method is used; and after its completion, sentence outline is written to develop the essay.

In short, writing pattern discussed here might, likewise, resemble a conversation between two people, where one speaker begins a discussion on a topic while the other deviates from the original topic; however, the original topic is revisited by both speakers over time. This “thinking out loud” pattern is evident in the writing of second generation student, Leonardo, and third generation student, Marina, who attested to “writing what is on her mind” and felt frustrated as a result.

The second interview, as previously stated in the methodology section of Chapter III, consisted of questions that this researcher wanted to ask the respondents, after having

read the respondents' entire first interview and writing samples. The majority of the questions were prompted by the childhood narrative.

All of the students responded to the questions thoroughly, except for Javier whose first interview and second interview responses were very brief. He directly stated to me, "My writing is straight to the point." The other students' answers were brief, but they still elaborated with more detail. As a result of the study, many of these students encountered various difficulties with their writing processes. In fact, the student who was provided with sufficient cultural capital would not hesitate to ask the professor for clarity on the topic in question, to use his research and library skills, and to write an assignment with much less difficulty and/or struggle. Also, the person who acquired sufficient cultural capital would have started reading and writing at a very early age and would have been exposed to consider many different ideas to write about spontaneously.

Recognition of Assignment Difficulty

Many students are often too embarrassed to ask professors about an assignment if they are having difficulty in understanding or accomplishing the given task. Alberto mentioned that he struggled to write the essay because he had to elaborate. He added, "Then they want me to elaborate a lot more than I need to." In order to discover if Alberto understood the concept of taking audience into perspective when writing or if he understood that he had to differentiate between the narrative and the research paper assignment, I asked him about the difficulty of the assignment, and he responded, "The childhood experience thing was coming like out of my heart and compared to the new life it was more of a research paper." Alberto's continuous reference of length and

elaboration made him recognize the importance of taking the time to write when he stated:

The *New Life* one was about I think we only had a week to do it and this one took me a whole month to do it....I remember having my third grade year book and I remember the first thing our teacher made us write was about a childhood experience...I remember having something that had to do with that story so I had to like look for that kind of thing kind of as a back-up since I couldn't remember much.

Second generation student, Javier, mentioned that he writes "straight to the point," and there was "no preference of [for] one over the other type of writing assignment." Leonardo believed that he still "need[ed] to work at it [writing] more, adding, "writing is not my subject....so even though many people say finally it's getting better I still don't see it that way." Rosa mentioned that, "It was easier to write about the personal topics and I would prefer them." She recognized that, "It took one week" to write a research paper in contrast to the narrative which took "a few days, less time." Rosa also recognized the difficulty she had with her own writing, when she said, "The introduction and the conclusion, I would struggle before, but now it is better." Of the two assignments, she preferred, "the assignment of the narrative."

Marina identified the difficulty in writing when she said that she experienced a certain degree of hardship and stated, "A little bit because you had to think back to when you were younger." She also mentioned that she preferred to write the "research paper, I

think I am kind of shy and I have a hard time talking about myself,” and she also stated that she was scared of writing because “people may make fun of how I write.”

Overall, some students preferred to write the narrative because it was a part of their personal life, while others preferred to write the research essay because they felt that it gave them focus. As Marina mentioned in her response, she preferred to write about a general topic with research than a more personal topic that reflected her own experience. Interestingly, the amount of time that it took for these students to write the narrative, which was not as complex as the research assignment requirement, exceeded the amount of time for the research paper. Also, Alberto mentioned that it took him more than a month to complete the given task. It seemed that when students are given too much freedom to accomplish the task, the students are probably not as motivated or focused to complete the assignment. If these students had a strong writing background, the childhood narrative would have been completed in one day to no more than one week; thus, this reinforcement shortage emphasizes a lack of cultural capital.

Consequently, the themes from the writing samples revealed the importance of cultural capital in a transitional program, including transition from high school to college and discrimination.

Transition of High School to College

Alberto, a first generation student, wrote about his transition from high school to college. Interestingly, Alberto’s paper paralleled some of the ideas presented in the literature review regarding transitional programs previously discussed in this study in Chapter II. For Alberto’s argumentative paper, he elaborated on the differences between

high school and college and how now he “was responsible for my [his] own education.” Throughout his argumentative piece, he addressed an example of social capital when he stated:

Nevertheless, friends are something we are going to need in college if we want to survive. Our professor will tell us, if we are going to miss class, then get the work from another student....One has to be careful when choosing what type of parties to attend, and who to have as friends. If our best friend is a party animal, it might make it a little difficult to concentrate on our studies....the people we meet here are very important ‘you are on your own for the first time, the friends you make in college become like a surrogate family.’

Alberto understood who he needs to associate with and what they will provide him during his college years. The understanding of his own needs concerning social capital may assist him in acquiring the cultural capital that will enable him to perform well in his future coursework and exams. Alberto also alluded to the important factors related to school financing and college attendance when he stated:

When I first enrolled at college, I was introduced to a little thing called ‘tuition and fees’....I never managed so much money before, was somewhat confused, and did not know what do with it. Another thing that I was introduced to was the idea that college is voluntary.

It is clear that Alberto’s transition from high school to college provided him with additional resources to continue his education. For instance, he realized that college had introduced him to the concept of “tuition and fees” and that he did not know how to

budget his tuition scholarship. In this example, the “college” becomes the means of providing him with more cultural capital. Since the college has introduced him to this concept, he now will be able to apply this concept in many areas of his life. He also mentions that “college is voluntary.” For Alberto, the idea of acquiring a greater sense of responsibility is one that he accepts by attending classes.

Discrimination

The dictionary defines discrimination as the “treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit” (Dictionary.com). The topic of discrimination was addressed by both Lisa and Rosa, and the lack of cultural capital exists in both narrative examples. Lisa, a first generation student, experienced discrimination from her teachers and her peers who rejected her because she could not speak English. She narrated:

One of the things i can recall from my childhood is the fear of beeing rejected.I lived in Minnesotta for few years and went to school there as well for some of my elementry years. It was hard for me trying to blend in and be like everyone else, because i was the only mexican there. The students would see me different due to my skin color and my eyes were not color like them. my hair wasnt as shiny and light as their beautiful blond shades.i felt the discrimination with the same teachers and their was a poing [point] in my life when i no longer wanted to go to school.We later moved back to Mexico where i though things woud change but to my luck it didnt.I didnt perfectly speak spanish due to the

many years living in the U.S ; i had to be moved from the third level grade i was into a first grade class where they had to teach me how to speak spanish from the begining. Student would make fun of me and say i was dump because i was mexican and didnt even know spanish. i started to feel like i didnt belong any where and i couldnt blend in with my own people. That same year with hard effort i learned all i could and starated speaking more spanish, i didnt really cared if i forgot how to speak inglish as long as they would accept me.

Lisa's experience toward discrimination was reflected by her not having acquired learning to speak a second language. She, like many other students, was at a disadvantage of being monolingual. She also experienced criticism and discrimination from both her teacher and peers. This example of discrimination contrasts Rosa's discriminating experience concerning her skin color. In this case, she stated, "It was the kids with the same family background....Those girls had brown-colored skin but since it was lighter than mine they felt it justified their behavior." She narrated:

Despite the fact that, this country is no longer openly discriminating legally, it was not easy for me growing up as a Mexican American female. Throughout my childhood I experienced discrimination from classmates at school. I was teased about the color of my skin and the origin of my family. Both of my parents were born in Mexico and their culture is extremely diffeetn [different] than American culture. This difference set me apart from most kids surrounding me. They would call me mean names such as wetback, nigger, and beaner. The majority of the girls in my class were medium-skinned color and I was 1 of the 3 dark-

skinned girls. Many times the medium-skinned colored girls refused to play with me because they felt superior to me. The funny thing is that white children were not the ones discriminating against me.

Rosa experienced discrimination because she did not have the knowledge, at that moment of her life, to understand if it was a cultural or malicious form of discrimination. It was not until both students matured that they realized what they perceived as discriminatory as children was now viewed much more carefully as adults.

The themes emerged from the two data sets represent how cultural capital is portrayed in a transitional high school to college program. It is apparent that all of these students possessed a certain degree of cultural capital; but in many of these cases, the IOSS program was providing them with additional cultural capital to transition throughout their summer coursework. Gandara's (1982) research focused on the study of "High-Achieving Chicanas" who "came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds" completed their degrees, and had attained professional careers (p. 167). Her study mentions that "The great majority of the women saw their mothers as strongly supportive of their educational aspirations, and many commented on their mothers' desires that their daughters be economically independent" (Gandara, 1982, p. 172). Similarly, all of these students were motivated to attain a college degree, and the majority of them mentioned that either one or both of their parents influenced them, as indicated by Lisa, a first generation student, and by Juan, a second generation student, regarding responses about who had influenced their education. These students had not only acquired the necessary cultural capital, but they also perceived the importance of

education and the effect of the IOSS program on their education. All of these students believed that they would still have attended college had they not participated in the program.

As previously referenced in Chapter I, social capital is the acquisition of networking. Social capital can enable a person to better himself by networking with someone who can help him acquire more information or contacts. From the interviews, the themes that supported the importance of social capital in a transitional high school to college program include learning preferences, participation of program/recommendation, frustrations with the program, peer review, and institute of student success (IOSS) influence.

Learning Preferences

Since social capital stresses the importance of networking, the students who participated in this study were able to network at different levels. They all became a part of a cohort which established many opportunities to exchange ideas with their fellow peers; the office of the IOSS established an opportunity to provide the students with various resources provided by the IOSS staff including an orientation to college. In class, the professors of the Freshman Composition I course included individual and collaborative learning. First generation student, Katia, preferred to work alone “because of my [her] own opinions,” but first generation students, Alberto and Lisa, preferred to work in a group. Alberto mentioned that he enjoyed listening to “other people’s views,” where as Lisa enjoyed working in groups. She said, “I get other ideas and explain I if I don’t get something I can ask questions with them and it kind of helps me understand

what is going on a little bit more.” Second generation students, Javier and Leonardo, prefer to work in groups because “it helps...develop good communication” and “other people can support you.” Second generation student, Rosa, prefers to work alone to avoid any distractions and Marina, third generation student, prefers to work alone as well. The typical recommended amount of study time outside of class for every one hour in class for students, provided to me by the Counseling Department at the community college of the Southwest, was a minimum of two hours per day. Thus, each student should be studying an approximate six hours per week for each course. The students responses to the questions about their study habits indicate that many of them do not have strong study habits as measured by hours of study per course and also, that only some want to work with others. To attain and foster social capital, a person must be able to communicate with other students and be willing to establish some networking with other people through group study at least to some extent.

Participation of Program/Recommendation

As a means of establishing an understanding of the importance of the IOSS’ benefits for the student participants, the students were asked if they would participate in the program again; all of the first generation students said they would participate. Lisa mentioned that the IOSS program “....pushed me a little bit to not do the same errors whenever I start again.” She also stated that the program had “helped me kind of to get an idea of what I’m expected to do in the fall.” Consequently, she also mentioned that she would recommend the program to other students because “it gives you an idea of

what college is and you get familiar with the campus too, with students, teachers, the building centers.”

Katia indicated that she would participate in the program once again because of the learning experience. Alberto stated, that “It helps you take the remedial classes in the summer—I took remedial math.” The second generation students said they would participate in the program once again. Leonardo said that, “It let’s the high school students get their feet wet.” Rosa also alluded to having fun, having no financial aid problems, and having help from the IOSS coordinator while in the program. Marina, the third generation student said she would recommend the program to others. An overall consensus on behalf of the student participants said they would recommend the program to other students. Social capital enables the student to acquire help and networking with others; and in this IOSS program, the staff was always readily available to assist the students and their parents with their questions concerning the program and their financial aid.

Frustrations with the Program

The students’ IOSS experience also identified the various frustrations of the program that they shared with me. Interestingly, Lisa and Katia mentioned the difficult task of doing homework everyday. Lisa stated, “I’m not really used to having homework a lot everyday so basically there’s a lot of homework due the next day.” Katia added that she had to get used to doing homework everyday. When asked this question concerning the frustrations with the IOSS program, Alberto quickly responded, “nothing really.”

The second generation students all mentioned that they had experienced some frustration with the IOSS program. Javier alluded to his “struggled [struggle] with history.” Leonardo became frustrated with the amount of writing in his classes, the course scheduling, and with “financial aid.” Some of these students mentioned that their financial aid checks came after the semester had begun, and this caused them to be behind on the reading of material because they had not purchased the books required for their courses in time.

The third generation student, Marina, experienced difficulty with the financial aid as well, when she stated, “At first, I did not hear about it and my dad made more money than the financial aid requirement, but then I was granted a scholarship.” Overall, all of the students’ responses attested positively to having had a good experience in the program amidst some minimal frustrations. They also confirmed that the students felt that they had benefitted from the learning and the coursework completed. Some, though, stated their initial experience in college was very similar to high school except for the amount of work that they had to accomplish in a relatively short amount of time. The difficulty that Javier experienced with his history course could have been addressed had he communicated with his professor and counselor to help him with his course difficulty. Leonardo could have also sought tutoring assistance to help him with his writing so that he could have learned some different techniques to improve his writing process and research. Both Marina and Leonardo could have sought a financial aid counselor to confirm that all of their application and financial aid had been processed. In effect, all of these students did not reach out to request the help; and as a

result, these students did not have sufficient social capital to better improve their transition into the college environment.

Peer Review

As an instructor of composition, I often assign my students a peer review activity and this teaching method has enabled me to encourage the students to read and identify errors in other students' writing and to suggest and/or comment. Peer Review is the "evaluation of a person's work or performance by a group of people in the same occupation" (Dictionary. com). The participating students in this study preferred to work alone in their writing process. They did not want to share their writing with others because of embarrassment or for fear of criticism made by other students. Interestingly, the reference to criticism later occurred in the narrative section where several of the students' narratives described their feelings of having been criticized or having experienced some form of criticism or not wanting to be criticized in their particular experiences.

In reference to the student reaction to peer review, some participants in the study enjoyed their peer review sessions because it gave them a chance to share their personal opinions, read and identify errors in the writings of other students, and it provided the possibility of learning about other people's opinions on a common topic. When Lisa responded to the question about the peer review process, she stated:

That's one of the things our teacher is making us do and I usually don't do it but it helps a lot to see the writings of others, and see how they can correct it and see if I have the same errors as they do or if I can improve it.

Lisa realizes that she has to participate in the peer review process as a requirement of the course, for she understands that the peer review will help her see the mistakes that she has made, and it helps her acquire this additional learning to avoid these making these similar mistakes in the future. Leonardo, a second generation student, stated, “It helps hearing other point of views.” Leonardo also understood the purpose of the in-class activity, and he found the experience to be very helpful. Marina, the only third generation student, said that she was “embarrassed about it. I am scared.” All of these students were placed in a cohort environment as part of their IOSS participation, and it provided them with another opportunity to increase their social capital because they would be given time in class to communicate and exchange ideas with their peers.

Rosa, a second generation student, alluded to the necessity of having a clear thesis with substantial information to support it. Javier, a second generation student, indicated that he had difficulty writing an introduction because he ran out of ideas. Lisa, a first generation student, stated that she was concerned about excessive run-ons and redundancy in her writing. Alberto, a first generation student, stated that he had difficulty with “the length, the specific amount of words because I write to the point and I have difficulty elaborating.” Leonardo, a third generation student, said that he had trouble staying focused in writing. This process is yet another example of how social capital is used in the academic environment. The students are able to exchange ideas in the classroom; and once they participate in this continuous dialogue, they are able to introduce each other to other resources on campus, including individuals who have helped them with their academic transition.

(IOSS) Influence

For the student participants in the program, the IOSS provided them the networking that they needed to help them transition into the college environment. Lisa narrated, “Yes, definitely, it’s a lot of help. It gives you an idea of what college is and you get familiar with the campus too, with students, teachers, the building centers.” Rosa mentioned that she had help from the IOSS coordinator, and Leonardo stated, that a program such as this one “let’s the high school students get their feet wet.” Each of the academic writing topics required sufficient elaboration to defend the student’s argumentative position. Most students used a variety of researched sources; however, the majority of the students focused on online database sources. Lisa mentioned that it was easier to write using a “Diane Hacker website” that helped her identify structural and/or grammar problems. The website provided information for both faculty and students on all of the grammar books Diane Hacker has authored. Some faculty incorporate the use of *The Bedford Handbook*, authored by Diane Hacker, as a supplemental reading for students in Freshman Composition I. Lisa specified that in writing her research paper, she wrote three drafts, but the narrative was easier because “it was about me.” Katia referenced to the IOSS program as having helped her develop “better study habits.”

Therefore, these interview questions on the IOSS program helped this researcher understand the usefulness of the program for these Mexican American students. By targeting pre and post experiences of the students’ responses to the IOSS program, the researcher was able to identify the program’s positive effects of the student’s experiences. The program provided the students with an opportunity to take courses,

receive credit, and maintain a demanding course load given additional resources as provided by the Office of the IOSS. Clearly, the students' experienced an opportunity to acquire social capital by networking with each other and with the IOSS staff.

A previous study prepared by Baez Aguilar (2005), this researcher, in relation to the IOSS program, covered the years 2003-2005. This previous qualitative study addressed the following three research questions: 1) Does a transitional program help a student conquer the fear of attending college? 2) What is the IOSS Program lacking to help retain IOSS participants from dropping out of college after a regular school year? 3) How can the IOSS Program recruit future high school graduate participants and what problematic inconsistencies if any are high school students' confronting with their college experience?

From the responses of the students current interviewed, the majority of them believed that the IOSS program was effective in that it provided many benefits and had few drawbacks. Students confirmed that a transitional program indeed could help a student complete any needed remediation during the summer, after completing high school. When the fall semester began, they were prepared to take regular college course work. The academic essay writing samples revealed the importance of social capital in a transitional program. Yet, the students' responses to their overall experience were categorized as sub themes underneath the student needs.

Student Needs

Leonardo, a second generation student, wrote about the problems encountered by college students, about the effects on him in particular as a student, and about finding resolutions to his problems. He stated:

Some of the problems that college students as well as I have to face are the classes itself (weekly test, response papers, essays). All these things can bring stress to a person and may even make people lose weight. It is also interesting that the economy is affecting college students. These are the people who are just a few years away from helping run this country and the recent economic situation is holding them back. The amount of money we have to pay to attend college.

“The tuition-setting season is upon us again. More than in previous years, our springtime announcements will be closely watched even by the general public...but college costs continue to soar well beyond inflation (O’Keefe).”

Also gas prices are another problem, because not everyone can afford to live on campus.

The following section of the students’ overall writing experiences focused on the students’ reactions of their writing for both the academic and narrative writing assignment. Each student’s response varied in length. The complete students’ responses are also located in Appendix F.

The first generation group all felt that the overall writing experience was a positive one. Lisa mentioned, “I think that it was a little bit of work in one month but I tried and it just kind of let me see that if I could do all that work in one month it would

be easier in the fall.” Katia said, “It is a good experience.” Alberto stated that he “felt o.k. after the program ended. It was smooth.” All of these students’ perceptions towards the writing experience was very positive. Second generation student, Javier re-emphasized that it too was a “good experience.” Leonardo revealed that he “thought it was worth it, I got to have classes under my belt and right straight out of high school so I was kind of used to the motion of school and everything so I’m kind of prepared for it.” Rosa reiterated that she “knows what college is like now.” Both Leonardo and Rosa believed that the writing experience had given them an opportunity to experience first hand the academic writing rigor. Marina, a third generation student, discussed that she had “learned a lot.” Thus, all of the students reacted positively to have participated in the IOSS Program and to have experienced an overall positive writing experience.

First generation student, Lisa, stated that she learned more about writing through the program.

At the beginning of the first week of class i wasn't really informed of the different types of writing and how to write to make your paper, essay or any writing better. I found my weakness in writing but i learn how to fix that. I did a lot of reading in the class i was taking which helped me see and how i can also write and how i can change stuff around to make my writing clear direct and accurate without a lot of disorganization. I have learn more and i know that i will keep improving as i keep practicing how to write.

Although Lisa submitted a rough draft of her narrative and overall writing experience without editing her draft, she has realized that she was able to recognize her weaknesses

and through the class work; she was able to learn how to address those problematic issues and continue to improve her work.

Katia's experience was similar to Lisa's when she stated:

My overall writing experience at [the college of the Southwest] was great. It helped me understand writing even more. Many of the styles we learned from high school were completely different from those in college. In high school we weren't enforced to use correct quotations in borrowed writing. In college, it is known as plagiarism and it is against the law. I also learned the different ways in citing work. My writing experience improved so much in just a short amount of time. It was a great experience.

Through the coursework, Katia was able to recognize the differences between the writing that was done in high school to that in college; she had learned that the sources that she used in high school for her papers had not been documented. As a result, she learned about plagiarism.

Alberto also saw the writing experiences as positive. He stated:

My overall writing experience was a good one. It was a good topic to write about. I hadn't touch the subject since elementary, so it was nice writing about old memories. Also not having to reach a certain amount of words was good.

Being able to write just enough to get my point across was good for a change.

Second generation student, Javier, mentioned that learning about writing was a "good experience." Leonardo's experience was summarized in one brief sentence, "I'm starting to feel more comfortable writing essays." Rosa stated the following:

It was a good writing experience, the semester was a process in which as days passed, I learned more. I had a different view of what a research essay was, so I had a difficult time getting started on it. The professor and the staff at the library helped me get started on this essay. When it was time to write the narrative it was easier for me to get started on it since I had gained knowledge of the steps and strategies to writing an essay.

Marina, a third generation student, also briefly related, “I really enjoyed the overall writing experience.” Overall, all of the students believed that their writing experience had been a positive one and that they had learned to improve their writing through the written assignments, the course, and additional help from librarians. Their participation in the course and program had given them an opportunity to acquire additional cultural and social capital, and these additional resources would then be used as they continued their future studies. With this reflective response, the students were able to begin to analyze their own writing process, writing difficulties, and writing experience.

In summary, the themes represented from the interviews and writing samples portray how social capital is represented in the transitional program. Because many of these students had not acquired all of the necessary cultural capital to help them attain social capital, these students are at a disadvantage. Moreover, they will have to struggle through different obstacles before they are able to gradually network and find ways to open more opportunities and additional beneficial resources for them.

From the writing samples, the themes that supported the Mexican American culture’s influence on writing included culture and traditions, migration, family, learning

another culture, identification of place and relevance of time, understanding, identity, criticism, and learning process.

Culture and Traditions

Culture and traditions are a part of one's identity and heritage. Culture is defined as "the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group" and a tradition is defined as "the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation especially by word of mouth or by practice" (Dictionary.com). In this selected theme, Rosa discussed the traditional and cultural expectation of a Mexican American family, which is to see all of the children grown and happily married. Yet, in Rosa's case, she did not follow the traditional norm; and as a result, it makes her feel as if she is being judged by others. Second generation student, Rosa's topic focused on, as she phrased it, "Overcoming [The] Single Parenthood Dilemma." In this paper, Rosa described her personal experience of being a single parent at thirteen, and she feeling displaced by not following her family's expectations. She stated, "My family comes from a culture where marriage is expected and in my situation, marriage didn't happen. This made me feel out of place, it made me feel I was being judged by all who surrounded me."

In her paper, Rosa also attested to living in a very difficult financial situation, stating:

Unfortunately, due to my economic status, relying on financial assistance has become a part of my life. It is saddening to know that my child and I are part of this statistic but I do not have any other choice since I come from a single mother

and low-income household.

Rosa knows that making the sacrifice of her time and energy now will help her complete her education and enable her to improve not only her life, but also that of her child. She described the following:

When I looked around, I saw my four year old daughter sitting on the floor across the room. She had a saddened look on her face, which was awkward because she is always happy. When I asked her what was wrong, she told me she wished I didn't go to school because I spend too much time on school than her. As a single mother, I have faced challenges/difficulties and realize the solution would be obtaining a college degree for a better future.

In her writing, Rosa referred to her mother's educational background in support of her argument's position, when she stated:

My mother only had a 3rd grade education and the only job she has been able to obtain is a home care provider for the elderly. It is a low paying job that does not provide enough money for our basic necessities. We receive food and health care benefits from the government and my mother must make ends meet in order to pay for rent, utilities and clothing.

Even though Rosa's example is one of many examples of single motherhood within the Mexican American community, Rosa is able to focus her attention towards her daughter, and she and her mother will work to survive their difficult situation.

Migration

Migration is defined as “the process or act of migrating” (Dictionary.com).

Migration is another theme that is most commonly associated with first and second generation Mexican American students because they have experienced the constant movement from one country to another. The theme of migration was discussed both by first generation students Lisa and Alberto. Lisa recalled having to return to Mexico from Minnesota, after she had lived in the US for awhile. She stated, “We later moved back to Mexico where i though things woud change but to my luck it didnt.” This form of migration is very similar to Alberto’s description of his migration into the US from Mexico when he narrated:

The wind blowing on the bus’s window woke me up from my long nap. As I opened my eyes I was amazed by all the tall buildings that surrounded us. My mom, seeing how astonished I was, whispered to me, “es el centro de San Antonio.” This was it, my sister, my mother, and I had finally arrived in the United States. While my mom was calling for a taxi, my sister and I went sightseeing some of the places around. The one that caught our attention immediately was El Paseo del Rio. We wondered how cool it must be to swim in there, and then just eat at one of the restaurants around it. Our exploration was cut short after we had to run away from a dirty looking man seating in the corner of a building who started yelling at us. When we got back with my mom, she told us that the taxi was here. It was time to go to my grandma’s house and meet up with family and our dad. As we arrived at my

grandma's house, we were welcomed by familiar faces. The first thing I noticed when we got inside the house was that Don Francisco was on. It was nice seeing him on TV, made me feel like this new place might not be much different than Mexico. By the time that we finished unpacking, Don Francisco was over and the news had started. Everyone got ready for bed, except me, I was too excited to go to bed.

It is obvious that both Lisa and Alberto experienced migration issues because of their families desire to be close to family.

Family

Family is a very important theme in the Mexican American culture because it is integral to the family environment, and it is what holds a group of people together as one. Family, defined as “a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not” (Dictionary.com) is an integral part of the students' topics. The family theme was mentioned by Katia, a first generation student, indicated the importance of family as she described her birthday narrative, stating:

‘Thank you mommy,’ was the first words that came out of my mouth when my mother gave me the doll during my birthday party. Even though I was only seven years old, I remember that day like if it was yesterday. My family has always been a poor family. We always struggle financially, but we always manage to keep a smile on our faces. We love each other and that is all that matters. My mother worked hard to save up to have that party for me. The whole day of my

party I had a huge smile on my face. I realized that my smile brightened up her day as well. When I was seven I didn't know how important money was, but now that I am older I understand. I am very grateful for my parents. That experience made me realize the importance of family and always staying together.

Also, Alberto, a first generation student, referred to his family members when he stated, "It was time to go to my grandma's house and meet up with family and our dad."

Among second generation students, Javier identified his family; Leonardo related the importance of family, family support, and duty to family, and Rosa discussed her family's background when she mentioned, "Both my parents were born in Mexico and their culture is extremely different than American culture." Family is invaluable to the Mexican American community because each person cares for one another, and each person is willing to make sacrifices for the other individual.

Learning Another Culture

Cultural assimilation begins when a person is immersed into another culture and its environment. Many of these students discussed the notion of learning about a different culture wanting to continue to hold on to their native culture. These students described their experiences with that new encounter. The theme of learning another culture, within the childhood narrative, embodied a self-reflection process enabling the student to write about their self-identification. The majority of students discussed some connection to the family or their culture, such as speaking their native language or learning to speak a new language. Alberto narrates:

So I started flipping channels on the TV, until I got to the cartoons. I

noticed that my favorite show, Pokemon, was on so I decided to watch it. It was going all good, but once the characters started to talk, I felt like someone had punched the air out of me. I did not understand a single word that came out of their mouth. Exhausted no more, I cried myself to sleep that night. The next morning, I was introduced to North Star Mall. I was overwhelmed by all the stores, especially the candy store. Who knew such a wonderful place really existed. After leaving the candy store, my dad took my sister and me shopping for some clothes. There were so many different stores to shop at. We eventually got to a store that sold clothes with cartoon characters. I was happy at the variety that they had. There were so many options that I couldn't decide what to get. One thing was sure, no Pokémon clothes for a while. When we got back to my grandma's house, we noticed that our favorite cousins had arrived from Mexico while we were away. Who needs dumb old Pikachu, when someone my age is around to play with. The next couple of days, I took my cousin to the candy store, and since he didn't know English either, we played outside instead of watching cartoons.

Alberto's experience of avoiding the new language that he will eventually need to learn is part of the process of cultural assimilation. On the other hand, Javier narrated his experience as a learning process of learning to speak a new language and stated:

A childhood experience that I hold strong to myself is learning how to speak english. The First two years of school I remember struggling a lot. My First language was spanish because my family is hispanic. Here in the United States

my mom had to learn quick about learning the native language. She always push me to master english. I spent many gruelling months practicing how to speak and write english. Suprisingly I learned english not by other teachers in school, but instead Television was my alley in the learning process. When ever I watched cartoons or anything on T.V. I remember absorbing everything.

In these two examples, Alberto and Javier learned about the importance of language and about using it to move ahead or about using it to resist an environment that is unacceptable. It seems that Alberto's reaction to learning about another culture takes place when he does not want to look at Pokemon any more because Pokemon does not speak his native tongue. However, Javier learns to accept the challenge of learning a new language because he witnessed his mother's struggle in moving ahead in life. The students also discussed the importance of family and love for each other, family unity, a parent's cultural identity, and a family's sacrifice to move ahead in life.

Identification of Place and Relevance of Time

Identification of Place and Relevance of Time easily bridge the idea of traditional story telling folklore that is always closely associated with culture. In a literary perspective, a pyramid structure for developing a short story includes the following parts: (a) a point of initiation otherwise known as beginning, (b) a rising action, (c) a climax, (d) a falling action, and (e) a dénouement otherwise known as an ending. The beginning of any story identifies the setting and atmosphere, and this process equates to the place and time that the story is taking place. "Each telling of a narrative situated in

time and space engages only facets of a narrator's or listener/reader's selfhood in that it evokes only certain memories, concerns, and expectations" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 22).

Since this narrative was a childhood experience, many of the students chose to describe a story that was relevant or had some relevance to their lives. Through their descriptions, these students identified a connection to their culture differently. Lisa's story began with an identification of place, described as Minnesota. She also identified the notion of time in her narration by identifying a particular time period, which in this case, were her elementary school years. Katia began her story by describing her mother's words; but then as she identified the history setting of a particular event and the relevance of time, she described as her 7th birthday. Alberto's story began describing a bus trip and arriving in San Antonio, Texas. Once again, the reference of place is identified at the inception of the narration.

Second generation students, Javier, Leonardo, and Rosa, all identified a place connected to their personal experiences. Javier recalled living in the United States in his "first two years of school." Leonardo's story initially described his childhood house, and he narrated:

Family has been an important part in my life. I grew up in a two-bedroom house. That may not seem like too big of a deal for most, but I am the youngest of three siblings. We (my father, mother and two siblings) have improved our lives through personal strife and with each other's support.

Both Rosa and Marina's narrations identified their previous school experiences at the beginning of their stories. Marina narrated:

One of the most relevant experiences of my childhood took place during my middle school years. It was definitely one of those things where, when you're younger, you sometimes think that the experience will never pass and that you'll be stuck in that place forever. Honestly, back then I would have probably considered the experience to be more negative than positive.

Within many cultures, storytelling is used to pass on morals, traditions and customs. Yet, the identification of place and the relevance of time tends to focus on a period of hardship experienced in their lives. In particular, for the first generation students, the focus was on their assimilation. Two out of the three second generation students also focused on the idea of coping with discrimination or trying to learn a new language to blend into the culture. Marina's writing identified her strong desire to be accepted at a particular time and place, which is relevant to any first generation student's experience. As a result, all of the students' narratives significantly located a place and time which embodied their understanding of what meant the most to them, at that particular moment in their lives, but it also asserted the importance of what they had remembered and why they had kept an internal recollection of that memory.

Understanding

Another theme that co-existed between the three generations was the theme of understanding. The dictionary defines understanding as "personal interpretation" (Dictionary.com). The concept of understanding connected to the students' culture because these students acknowledged that they did not know how to deal with various circumstances, but they learned and began to analyze the importance of these

experiences as they developed a means of understanding. In the first generation group, Lisa began to understand other cultural backgrounds and their importance as she matured; she narrated:

As i grew older i mature and i learn that there are many cultures and that i shouldnt feel bad instead i should be thankfull that i could learn from past experience and appreciate life more. I learn to interact with diffrent people, kids and adults due to the diffrent changes i went through. I have been to sixteen different school and i have made friends and known the differnt personalities there is and i shouldnt just stick to one kinda of person to be their friend but be friends with varieties of people.

Alberto, a student, within the same group, referenced a lack of understanding the foreign language, when he emigrated from Mexico. In the second generation group, Leonardo believed he understood the need to pursue an education; whereas, Rosa too thought that she understood the cultural differences between Mexico and the US when she stated, “Both of my parents were born in Mexico and their culture is extremely diffeetn than American culture.” The third generation student, Marina, related that she understood the learning process and her childhood experience, in her narrative:

However, now that I’m older I appreciate the experience more and from it I was able to learn from my mistakes. The experience helped paved the way for me to become the person I am today. During my middle school years, I guess you could say I was somewhat of a loser. I really feel like that is the most honest way I can put it. I look back on it now and I really can’t believe the way I acted. I tried so

hard to fit in with this certain group of kids. I lied. I cussed. I turned myself into this person who I really wasn't. It was never ending. The sad part is I actually thought I was cool. I see these little girls now trying to act older then they really are and I see how silly they look. And I'm pretty sure I must have looked the same way. It's embarrassing to think that's how I must have been. I thought by acting a certain way and doing the things the other kids wanted me to do, it would make them like me. It didn't really. If anything, it just made things worse. I never knew who my real friends were. I also knew there were many times when other girls would make fun of me behind my back. I went through my entire middle school like this. I was miserable. I was always scared of being who I really was because I didn't want the other kids to make fun of me. It wasn't until around my second year of high school that I realized how naïve and stupid I was being. I realized, for the first time, that you don't have always have to prove yourself to other people just to get them to like you. The experience taught me a lot. Being only around eleven or twelve when I entered middle school, I wasn't exactly sure of the kind of person I wanted to be. Now that I'm older, I have more of a clear vision of the kind of person I hope to be. I feel like without the experience that I went through during my childhood years, I would never have been able to become the person I am today.

For the Mexican Americans, it is very important to understand what others think of them and how they are perceived to others because their integrity and pride represents the family's name. As shown in these two student examples, Lisa begins to understand what

caused her to reflect the way that she is thinking, based on her maturity. Yet, Alberto did not understand the importance of learning a new language as he transitioned to a dominant English environment. Marina desired to be accepted; and in the process, she understood that a person does not have to merit the acceptance of others while not fully accepting oneself in the process.

Identity

Identity is defined as a “condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is” (Dictionary.com). The theme of identity is often recognized by every culture because it emerges as the one identification that a person has of him/herself. Thus, identity is another general theme found among students. Each student reflected his/her own identity in different ways. In the first generation, Lisa identified her Mexican identity by saying, “because I was Mexican and didn’t even know Spanish.” While Rosa, in the second generation, acknowledges her identity as “a Mexican American female.” Lisa also realized as a child, that she wanted to be accepted by others, and her constant moving from place to place made it extremely difficult for her to find a “safe” place where she could speak either English or Spanish and be accepted. This continual movement from place to place is identified as, mobility, according to Ream (2003):

Student mobility affects social capital development in a manner that may contribute to Mexican-American underachievement....mobility tends to disrupt social root systems, challenging the development and maintenance of social capital, in part, by inhibiting students’ efforts to make new friends, adjust socially to a new school situation, and develop reciprocal relations with school

personnel. (p. 239)

It was not until Lisa reached adulthood that she realized the importance and appreciation of culture when she stated, “As i grew older i mature and i learn that there are many cultures and that I shouldn’t feel bad instead I should be thankfull [thankful] that I could learn from past experience and appreciate life more.”

In much the same way, Katia described her self-interest and that she did not realize how economically deprived her family was until she grew older; she stated, “My family has always been a poor family....When I was seven I didn’t know how important money was, but now that I am older I understand.” Alberto’s identity resonated through his frustration and hurt as he realized his inability to understand the language of his new home environment. He recollected,

I noticed my favorite show, Pokemon, was on so I decided to watch it. It was going all good, but once the characters started to talk, I felt like someone had punched the air out of me. I did not understand a single word that came out of their mouth. Exited [Excited] no more, I cried myself to sleep that night.

Javier’s ethnic identity focused on his intense struggle to learn a new language and assimilate into society.

Leonardo’s identity is heavily influenced by his father representing a positive role model for him, as well as his “duty to take care of him as he has taken care of us through the years.” Rosa’s identity is a unique example of how a person’s cultural background can hinder rather than benefit an individual, as she stated,

Despite the fact that, this country is no longer openly discriminating legally, it

was not easy for me growing up as a Mexican American female...The funny thing is that white children were not the ones discriminating against me, it was the kids with my same family background.

However, the third generation student, Marina, reflected a very different kind of identity. Her perspective of self identity, as she narrated in her childhood experience, was a “masked identity” in which she became another person just to be accepted by others. This idea of a “masked identity” began to affect her own life. She narrated, “During my middle school years, I guess you could say I was somewhat of a loser...I look back on it now and I really can’t believe the way I acted. I tried so hard to fit in with this certain group of kids. I lied. I cussed. I turned myself into this person who I really wasn’t...I was miserable. I was always scared of being who I really was because I didn’t want the other kids to make fun of me. As Marina matured, she “realized for the first time, that you don’t have always have to prove yourself to other people just to get them to like you.”

All of these examples reflect the students’ identities and their connection to their personal experiences and backgrounds. Each experience fostered a connection to individual identity and how it was influenced by the surrounding environment and culture.

Criticism

Every culture tries to compete with other cultures in multiple levels including economy, technology, and research. This level of competition often draws criticism from people, governments, and institutions. The dictionary defines criticism as “the act of

passing judgment as to the merits of anything” (Dictionary.com). These students did not want to experience the judgment of others, and the student’s reflection of criticism was viewed from different perspectives in their writing. Lisa, a first generation student, experienced criticism when the girls would laugh at her because she could not speak English. She stated, “Student[s] would make fun of me and say I was dumb because I was Mexican and didn’t even know Spanish. I started to feel like I didn’t belong anywhere and I couldn’t blend in with my own people.”

Second generation student, Leonardo’s perception of growing up in a modest home and thinking that it was not something important for others was mentioned at the beginning of his narrative. He stated, “I grew up in a two-bedroom house. That may not seem like too big of a deal for most.” Pointing out the two bedroom house as he begins the narrative is an effort to explain that he is not wealthy. His economical situation is not only highlighted at the beginning of his narrative, but it is also referenced at the end, and he paid close attention to the use of the word scholarship. He stated, “With the help from this scholarship, greatest obstacle (money) can be overcome.” Again, Leonardo referenced the economical situation that he had experienced, representative of the lack of economic capital that many low-socioeconomic students, who attempt to attend college for the first time, regularly face.

Second generation student, Rosa’s, comments about criticism pertained to her being laughed at, very similarly to Lisa’s experience about the girls teasing her. Yet, in this case, she “was teased about the color of my [her] skin and the origin of my [her] family.” The girls would also call her derogatory names such as, “wetback, nigger, and

beaner.” Rosa’s experience of criticism focused on her ethnicity and the problem that existed with the idea of superiority of others within the same culture. Marina, the only third generation student, perceived criticism when she referenced that girls laughing at her as well. “I also knew there were many times when other girls would make fun of me behind my back.” She stated, “I was miserable. I was always scared of being who I really was because I didn’t want the other kids to make fun of me....I still struggle sometimes with that fear of what people might think of me.”

Through all of these prevalent themes, identity, learning process, criticism, and understanding are themes that are associated with cultural and social capital. Obviously, many of the experiences that these students shared through their narratives described very personal and difficult examples of sacrifices and challenges that are gradually overcome through the acquisition of cultural and social capital.

The first generation students, Lisa and Alberto, both connected to their learning process. Lisa understood the changes required by different cultures in moving from one place to another where her process of assimilation is an acquisition of another cultural experience. Alberto realized that even though he struggled with a foreign language he had to eventually acquire the language to continue to live in this place he now called, “my home away from home.”

Second generation student, Leonardo, also understood that he had to pursue an education; this decision and his future education will be the cultural and social capital he will acquire. For Rosa, a second generation student, her background and the knowledge that she has acquired to understand the cultural customs and norms of two different

cultures is yet another example of cultural capital acquisition because not all students are privileged to comprehend the customs, traditions, and ideals of two different cultures. Interestingly, Lisa and Katia were both affected with a lack of social capital. Lisa was always moving from place to place, and this continual movement did not give her an opportunity to settle down in one place and make the friends and connections that she could attain through networking which predominantly exists in social capital. Another example of a first generation student's experience is Katia's family economic situation. It has limited her from acquiring more social and cultural capital because her family has to strive to work hard for everything that they would like to have in their lives.

Second generation student, Javier, acquired more cultural capital when he decided to learn another language to enable him to assimilate to the culture. Several students, Lisa, Rosa, and Marina, all narrate that they had experienced some type of criticism. Lisa, a first generation student, experienced a lack of cultural capital because she was unable to speak a foreign language. Rosa, a second generation student, was ridiculed because of the color of her skin, yet she realized that those individuals who treated her much better were the people that were not of her own race, and this is an understanding of both social and cultural capital.

A final criticism discussed by Marina, the only third generation student, is that she did not want others to laugh at her, and this indicated a lack of social capital attainment because she has not discovered who she needs to be as a person and who she needs to select as friends. As previously mentioned, Alberto's example relates to his college professor emphasizing the need to know who your friends will be in your college

environment because they will be “long-life friends.” Leonardo, a second generation student, does not want to be criticized for where he lives, and he mentions the importance of acquiring money for his education through a scholarship. This example connects to the lack of economic capital which leads to a lack of social and cultural capital as well. All of these students clearly narrated their personal experiences, which were relevant to me in understanding how cultural and social capital are significant to these students who participated in this transitional high school to college program.

Learning Process

The basic learning process is developed through an individual’s family and schooling. What is taught to a child is usually a combination of the environments traditional norms, beliefs, and customs. Yet, the individual learns to apply these components to his/her own life. The learning process was the last reoccurring theme that existed in the three generations researched. For Lisa, a first generation student, realized upon reaching maturity, that she had learned how to view different cultures and their importance. She said, “i learn that there are many cultures and that i shouldnt feel bad instead I should be thankfull [thankful] that i could learn from past experience and appreciate life more.”

Javier, a second generation student, referenced his learning process as difficult, when he stated, “Here in the United States my mom had to learn quick about learning the native language. She always push me to master english. I spent many gruelling months practicing how to speak and write english. Surprisingly I learned english not by other teachers in school, but instead Television was my alley in the learning process.” The

third generation student, Marina, also discussed her learning process as having gained an understanding and an appreciation for her experience, stating, “Honestly, back then I would have probably considered the experience to be more negative than positive. However, now that I’m older I appreciate the experience more from it I was able to learn from my mistakes.”

All three examples identify the learning process as an opportunity to recollect their experiences and extract the most from each experience. As evidenced from the writing samples, the themes that supported the Mexican American culture’s influence on writing included culture and traditions, migration, family, learning another culture, identification of place and relevance of time, understanding, identity, criticism, and learning process.

Summary

As previously referenced in Chapter I, the purpose of the study was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students’ culture had on their writing. The research questions that directed this study were the following: (a) How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program, (b) How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students, and (c) How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

Finally, this chapter has addressed the relevant collapsed themes addressing the research questions identified as a result of the data collection. The overall findings of this section exemplify the students' perception of their experiences within a transitional program and the importance of the Mexican American culture in the writings of first and second generation students. Thus, Chapter V will direct us to the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to determine how culture influences the writing of first to third generation Mexican American students in a transitional high school to college program. The research questions used to explore this study were the following:

1. How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program?
2. How does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students?
3. How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

Chapter II covered the review of literature, and it discussed the literature focused on Latinos and higher education, the literature of types of transitional programs, the literature focused on the needs of students, and the literature of writing research related to Latinos. Chapter III explained the methodological framework and process for the data collection analysis.

To review the study design, this study incorporated two interviews. The first interview consisted of 14 questions related to the students' (a) generational background and familial environment, (b) the students' writing process, and (c) the students experience within this IOSS transitional high school to college program. Of the seven respondents, four female and three male, three students were classified as first

generation Mexican American, three were classified as second generation Mexican American and one student was classified as third generation Mexican American. All of the students participated in the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) program, and all were enrolled in Freshman Composition I during the summer semester when I began the data collection. In addition to the fourteen interview questions, three writing samples were collected for this study: an argumentative research paper, a childhood narrative, and a reflection of their overall writing experience. After the writing samples were collected, I conducted a brief second interview based on my reading of the students' writing samples.

The interview questions provided an opportunity for me to understand each student's background, to analyze each student's writing process, and to evaluate each student's participation in the IOSS program. The first question in the background section was "What type of degree do you want, and do you see yourself attaining a graduate degree?" All responded that they were seeking degrees, whether Associate's degree, a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree or a professional degree (in medicine). All of the participants had a specific career interest in mind.

Question two asked "Are you a first, second, or third generation Mexican American student?" Each student responded to the question and this researcher grouped the students according to generation: Lisa, Katia, and Alberto were categorized as first generation; Javier, Leonardo, and Rosa were categorized as second generation, and Marina was the only third generation student.

The third background question asked, “What is the highest level of education in your family and specifically your parents?” The parents’ education ranged from grade school to high school to some college.

The fourth question in the interview question asked, “a) Has anyone influenced your education? b) If yes, please explain how?” All of the students responded that either one or both parents had positively influenced their desire to attend college, except for Rosa, a second generation student, who stated that she had been influenced by her daughter to continue with school so that she could provide a better environment for her daughter.

The next question five asked the students to “Explain to me, how do you study for your classes?” The majority of the students responded that they studied approximately one to two hours a day and several students stated that they tried to spend time in a quiet environment because they were easily distracted.

Question number six asked, “In class, do you prefer to work by yourself or in groups and explain why do you prefer one to the other?” Three students responded that they would be willing to work in a group environment, and three students mentioned that they prefer to work alone. Lisa, a first generation student, indicated that she could work either alone or in a group environment and that “it depends on the subject.”

The following questions, from seven to ten, located within the “Personal Reflections of Writing” section of the interview, focused on the students’ writing process and their connection to writing. Question seven “a) Do you enjoy writing? b) Do you fear writing?” Out of the seven respondents, Lisa, a first generation student, and Marina,

a third generation student, clearly responded that they both enjoyed writing. The other respondents mentioned that they were not very fond of writing and that it took too much time. One student, Rosa, also related that she did not understand her “teacher’s expectations of my writing.”

Question eight asked the students to “Describe your writing process: from brainstorming to editing.” Out of the seven respondents, six used the traditional writing method of beginning with an outline to assist them in brainstorming and to help organize their paper. Leonardo, a second generation student, mentioned his hope that professors would provide him with an outline. Each student added other techniques employed when writing. For example, Alberto discussed that he used peer review; Marina noted that she read her paper over several times, and Rosa pointed out that she conducted a spell check, and reviewed her paper both for “fallacies” and for “sentence structure.”

Question nine asked, “Do you engage in peer review of the writing of others?” Katia, a first generation student, Rosa, a second generation student, and Marina, a third generation student, did not participate in peer review. However, two first generation students, Lisa and Alberto, also said that they did not participate in peer review, but if they were asked to participate, they would take advantage of the opportunity provided. Two second generation students, Javier and Leonardo, said that they actively participated in the peer review process.

Question ten asked the student respondents, “What are the difficulties that you encounter or struggle with while writing an essay?” Overall, the students mentioned that they had experienced some difficulty focusing on a topic and the introduction of their

papers, while others stated that they had difficulty with editing. Only one student, Alberto, was concerned with the length of an assignment when he stated, “The length, the specific amount of words because I write to the point and I have difficulty elaborating.”

The last section of the interview questions asked about expectations when beginning the IOSS Program and about their thoughts concerning the program after the program came to an end. Question eleven consisted of “a) What were your initial expectations of the IOSS? b) How did you feel after the program ended?” All of the students’ responded that participating in the Program had been a very positive learning experience for them.

Question twelve addressed the following: “a) If given the opportunity to participate in this program once again, would you accept the invitation or not, and why? b) Would you recommend this program to other students?” All of the students unanimously agreed that they would participate in the program and that they would recommend it to others.

Question thirteen asked, “If you had not been selected to the IOSS, what would be the likelihood of you going to college?” Once again, all of the students agreed that they would all attend college, but a first generation student, Lisa, mentioned that she would have preferred to take a break in between high school and college, in stating, “I actually wanted to have a some time to rest and then go again and return, but it would take a little bit longer... I don’t thing it would have been as constant as it is going to be now.”

The final question in this set of interview questions, question fourteen asked, “What types of frustrations did you experience with the IOSS?” The one common response from all of the student respondents was the students’ adjustment to the amount of coursework required by the college course. Other comments consisted with having difficulty with financial aid and class scheduling.

After the first interview, students were asked to submit a copy of the research paper that they submitted to their instructor in the last week of their class. These samples provided the researcher with an opportunity to evaluate the type of topic selected by the students for the class as well as a chance to evaluate the students’ writing of an academic paper. A second writing sample collected from the students’ was a childhood narrative. There was neither length nor a specific topic requirement for their paper because I wanted to give them an opportunity to respond freely to the topic without any constraints. I used Gee’s (1999) method of analysis for studying the students’ narratives, for the analysis identified several themes as referenced in Chapter IV. The narratives gave respondents an opportunity to reflect on an issue that affected their childhood and gave me insight as to how they reacted to the experience. It is evident for example, that Marina, a third generation student, feared the opinions of others.

The third writing sample submitted to me by the respondents was their individual evaluations of the program writing experience as a whole. I wanted to provide each student with an opportunity to reflect on his/her own writing experience, to state which of two writing assignments they preferred, and to estimate the difficulty of the writing assignments.

The submission of the three writing samples provided me an opportunity to evaluate the student's writing when it is written either in a reflective mode (personal experience) or when it is written as a standard academic research paper. The analysis of the childhood narrative furnished me with the opportunity to see if there were themes common to more than one student. Furthermore, this chapter will provide a summary of results, implications for further research, and some policy recommendations of the study.

Summary of Results

The findings did answer the research questions, and it is apparent that both cultural and social capital is invaluable to a student's educational development. Everyone projected a certain degree of cultural and social capital; but in the interim of their participation within the Institute of Student Success (IOSS) transitional program, the students began to learn how to acquire additional "capital." As referenced in the student responses reflecting on their IOSS participation, many of the students' perceptions of the program were positive and very few students had a negative experience with their taking part in the program. Moreover, all of these Mexican American students had the intention of attending college even if they had not participated in this transitional program. They all were not only influenced by their parents' achieve, but Rosa, a second generation student, was also motivated by her daughter and the future that she wants to provide for the child since she is a single, young mother. Each student had already selected a particular career that he/she wanted to pursue; and although many of these students are not first generation college students,

they still made the decision to participate in this program during the summer after graduating from high school.

The findings also identified the students' study preferences/habits, and the data showed that half of the students preferred to study individually while the other half preferred to study in a group environment. The students also identified a pattern of habitual studying for classes because of the course load, but the students' expectations of the program were varied in perspective because some students believed that there was an easiness to their transition into college; and other than the weekly assignments, they did not believe that college was as difficult as previously thought. The only difficulties encountered with the IOSS program were the amount of homework that was turned in on a daily basis, the amount of writing in the coursework, the course scheduling, and financial aid.

Discussion of Results and Contribution to Literature

This study had two foci: 1) The transitional experience of Mexican American students in the IOSS program and 2) Mexican American students and writing and its application to a conceptual framework of cultural and social capital. The study does apply to theory/research, policy, and practice. It is evident that the theoretical frameworks of cultural and social capital are imperative to assisting Mexican American students to succeed in college/university. Both cultural and social capital help provide the necessary resources to help students as they transition to an environment of higher education.

This study does provide the analyses of the value of transitional programs

relative to Mexican American college students. In particular, the study focused on Mexican origin students' transition to college, students who are at risk of not receiving college degrees. "When individuals are denied a quality education, they are also denied access to political and economic literacy, to social integration into the mainstream, to employment opportunities, and, thus to upward mobility" (Briscoe & Ross, 1989, p. 587). Many of these Mexican American students drop out of school because they feel isolated or because they have not acquired sufficient social capital to help them get through the educational system. "Students navigating the system alone while also tending to their current education keenly feel the absence of family and community members who have already mastered the process" (Brown, Santiago & Lopez, 2003, p. 42). A review of the literature found, as of now, that there has been no study of a transitional program of students of Mexican origin with a focus as to how their culture influences their writing in composition courses. Other studies of high school to college programs have analyzed student orientation, student development courses, and first year in college experiences more generally.

As previously identified in the literature review, Jeria and Roth (1992) identified several different types of transitional programs helping students transition from high school to college. The College of William and Mary focused on a program specifically guiding junior year high school students and an orientation to the campus experience. William and Mary designated a specific advisor to help the student transition from high school to college. Rutgers University developed a program that would help them communicate with students through the use of various communication forms, the

students were also provided with counseling and tutorial help during their transitional process. Texas Tech University developed a communication partnership between a faculty member and a high school class. This fostered continual exchange between the students and the university professor in answering questions that perhaps would not have been addressed otherwise.

Laden (1998) discussed the *Puente Project*, which is joint “Latino transfer” venture between the University of California and several community colleges. The purpose of this program is to help students transfer from the community college to the university. This study contributes to an understanding as to how cultural capital and social capital theory can be applied to ethnicity, teaching, and to transitional programs and how student experiences can be understood through these two lenses.

This research study is the beginning of further study in the much larger Latino population including students from other Latino ethnicities in an effort to evaluate any similarities and/or differences amongst the various ethnic backgrounds and a more in depth longitudinal study could evaluate the continual progress of students who participate in transitional programs.

There is a prevalent need for further study in the area of how teachers influence students within a transitional program, and what types of assignments should English teachers use to help those underprepared students to adjust themselves for academic writing. Hernandez’ (1968) reflection of the need to teach English to the “culturally disadvantaged Mexican –American student” is something that is still reminiscing in the classroom today amidst the growing number of Latino students in higher education.

“The willing teacher must accept the other outward facet of the problem, the reality of the teaching of Mexican-American students” (Hernandez, 1968, p. 88). This example is one of many that has been addressed in the literature of cultural studies, learning culture, and culturally relevant curriculum (Jacobson, 1996; Sparks, 1998; & Woodhams, 1999).

According to Sealey-Ruiz (2007), “Students who see their culture represented in the curriculum are more likely to have a higher self-concept, and when students feel good about themselves, they are more likely to be open to others and to learning” (p. 48). Current studies in the field of culturally relevant material include Rybak, Poonawalla, Deuskar, and Bapat’s (2007) study of the implementation of Yoga and other exercises to help graduate psychology students understand theory through experiential learning and Tisdell and Tolliver’s (2001) study explored the role of spirituality in adult education. Some improvement has been made since Peterson’s (1999) study emphasized the need to integrate the historical contributions of African Americans and other ethnicities at a much more deeper level. “The master script deletes or distorts the stories of African Americans, especially those who challenge the power and authority of the dominant culture” (Peterson, 1999, p. 86).

Yet, there is a great need for further study and implementation of material that will be relevant to all ethnicities and teachers need to be more receptive to learning about other cultures and recognizing the need to promote culturally relevant information. “Understanding the significance of a culturally relevant pedagogy demands that the research attend to all the facets of the learning environment that affects learning.

Invariably, our culture is an intrinsic part of who we are and how we identify ourselves” (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007, p. 58).

Another area of further study is an evaluation of the college dropout rate of participants who complete the IOSS Program. There is a need for a longitudinal study to examine the overall academic performance of college or university students who participated in the IOSS transitional program in comparison to non-IOSS students. A final implication for further longitudinal research is an evaluation of social capital as it pertains to college/university students who have participated in the IOSS Program.

Several policy recommendations can be proposed from my study. First, a good number of students have not yet developed their writing skills upon graduating from high school, and they hesitate to ask the instructor questions because they do not want to appear underprepared before their peers or to their teachers. It is evident that a positive and welcoming environment by teachers would seem to be appropriate, certainly at the beginning of the program, to help these students overcome many of their fears and apprehensive attitude towards the subject. Another policy recommendation would be that Freshman Composition I instructors of English use personal and reflective writing exercises in their courses at the beginning of the semester.

By using such a method, teachers would better understand their students’ backgrounds, which are often very different from their own. Also, this method is not as difficult for students, as traditional academic writing is focused on research and students are able to gradually reach this level if they start at the beginning of the semester writing about their own life experiences. Guy (1999) discussed the importance of “not

underestimating the power of community” and its importance on student’s learning (p. 95). “A single teaching strategy is not appropriate for all Latino students, just as one instructional strategy cannot reach all white students. Teachers need to use a variety of teaching tools, including thematic units, lectures, guided practice, cooperative groups, and development of critical thinking skills” (Rolon, 2003, p. 2).

A final policy recommendation would be that the National Department of Education implement a resource for students at risk of failure in college so that they would have the opportunity to participate in a transitional high school to college program if they chose to do so. This would help the current trend of Latinos who are gradually enrolling in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) as opposed to non-Hispanic Serving Institutions because of the “combination of student and family knowledge of higher education, proximity to home, affordability and institutional outreach” all influence this trend (Brown & Santiago, 2004, para. 11).

In addition, it could also help those students who are at risk for failure to succeed in their transition from high school to college. Barajas and Pierce’s (2001) study identified the importance of race and gender as influential to the success of Latinos in college and this study of the IOSS transitional program would indeed enable more students to be successful in college and/or university.

Implications for Adult Education

This study is imperative to the field of adult education because it is critical for educators to understand the importance of cultural and social capital as it relates to adult students learning in the classroom. It is significant that one looks at Merriam and

Caffarella's (1999) description of the importance of prior knowledge and experience in *Learning in Adulthood*, which focuses on the acknowledgement of student's previous experiences to be central to the process of learning. "In exploring the role of prior knowledge and experience in learning, two ideas are important: the amount of prior knowledge and experience and its nature" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 206).

It is significant for educators to understand that a person's knowledge in one area does not specifically make a connection to expertise in another area. "Educators have often observed that being an expert in one area does not necessarily translate into being an expert in another, no matter what the learner's motivation or background" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 207). Thus, writing for instructors at the college and university level to understand the previous experiences of their students and to guide them into gradually approaching the subject matter by connecting the curriculum and prior experiences into a new learning experience for the students. "Therefore, in helping adults connect their current experience to their prior knowledge and experience, we need to be knowledgeable about the amount of prior knowledge they possess in a particular area and design our learning activities accordingly" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 207).

It is also important to approach this same ideology from a non-teaching perspective and imply that it can also be used by administrator and staff members at institutions of higher education. In an effort to reach out to students' previous experiences and to enable them to acquire additional cultural and social capital found at institutions of higher education, the administration and non-teaching professional staff

can help promote higher retention and productive grade rates, as well as an overall wonderful learning experience.

Another implication for policy is the challenge to change the current curriculum standards and require an inclusion of culturally relevant material in the curriculum to teach in the classroom as a means to avoid the “racial bias” that in many cases hinders minority students from succeeding. “Racial bias often prevents African Americans from receiving access to an enriched curriculum, even within a seemingly integrated system” (Peterson, 1999, p. 86). It is obvious that racial bias does not only affect African Americans but Latinos as well. “African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans continue to experience discrimination” (Guy, 1999, p. 10).

At the college and university level, many minorities are too often excluded from the curriculum, and this results in a “racial bias” of the teacher not desiring to include other culturally relevant material. “For adult educators interested in addressing the ways in which cultural domination affects learners in adult education settings, educational strategies must be developed to minimize the potential for further exclusion and marginalization of learners” (Guy, 1999, p. 13).

In an effort to evaluate any similarities and/or differences amongst the various ethnic backgrounds, a more in depth longitudinal study could evaluate the long term effects of students who have participated in such transitional programs. According to Reyes (2009):

Many Mexican American students living situationally marginalized lives deal with distinct and adverse life situations that have negatively impacted their personal life trajectories and ultimately their performance in school....Because living a situationally marginal existence often is extremely complex and difficult for adolescents who look to adults as role models to provide examples of how to live a positive life, students from such backgrounds will struggle with how to effectively navigate schools in order to be successful. (p. 106)

It is apparent that a longitudinal study would enable both the colleges/universities and the participating transitional programs to better assess the factors that are making the students succeed, once they have completed their participation in a transitional program and after their degree completion.

Another implication for policy change is the type of preparation that students are given at the high school level to enable them to prepare for their future college/university experience. The college/university readiness should not be explored at the students' junior and senior year but at the beginning of their freshman year in collaboration with the students' parents, teachers, counselors and administrative staff and in collaboration with area colleges and universities.

The community colleges should also develop a greater plan for college readiness by creating a bridge with all of the area high schools and charter schools to ensure that the levels of reading and writing are in accordance with what is expected at the college level. A remediation summer program at the end of every freshman and sophomore high school year could be a possible solution to this lack of preparation. As a result, this type

of implication would help decrease the number of students enrolled in developmental courses at the college and university level.

Furthermore, “Minorities often are blamed for the deprivation they experience such as poverty, crime, illiteracy, and drug addiction....minorities are then denied access to the kinds of public and private resources that can facilitate economic progress” (Guy, 1999, p. 12). It is evident that there needs to be greater focus placed on the acquisition of additional cultural and social capital for Latinos, in general, but especially for the Mexican American students so that they can be able to “navigate” the academic environment with a much greater ease and in the process achieve a more enriched educational experience.

Conclusion

In summation, this study does answer the research questions presented at the beginning of this work. This study has enabled this researcher to demonstrate that the Mexican American culture does influence the writings of first and second generation students within a transitional high school to college program. The three different writing samples collected in this study reflect many cultural themes related to each student’s cultural background and identity. Simultaneously, the writing reflected the social class background of the respondents.

A transitional high school to college program has a positive effect in providing cultural and social capital for students in transition from high school to college. Recruiting participants into the program one year prior to enrolling the students in the IOSS program and providing a welcoming atmosphere in the program, students can

effectively receive guidance and orientation as they begin their first semester of college. The cohort environment enables the participants of the program to identify with other participants of similar cultural backgrounds and provides a collaborative learning opportunity.

The transitional high school to college program also provides a substantial amount of social capital for the students by introducing them to various departments on campus and contacts to help them continue their learning experience. These students are not only provided with help in filling out applications for financial aid, but they are also introduced with specific individuals who will help them move forward. For example, Rosa, a second generation Mexican American student, knew that her teacher could not provide her with the research information that she needed. She decided to contact a staff librarian to help her obtain research information for her paper and indeed did obtain the information needed to complete her assignments.

By providing first to third generation Mexican American students with an opportunity to participate in a transitional high school to college program and acquire additional cultural and social capital in the process, they have a greatly improved chance of acquiring the necessary resources to enable them to achieve their educational goal of doing well in college.

Summary

The purpose of the study as identified in Chapter I was to understand and explain how the Mexican American students perceived their transition into college and to understand the influence the Mexican American students' culture had on their writing.

The research questions that directed this study were the following: (a) How influential in building cultural capital is a transitional high school to college program, (b) To what extent does a transitional high school to college program provide social capital not provided by the families of participating students, (c) How does the Mexican American culture influence narratives of students within a transitional high school to college program?

Chapter II reviewed the relevant literature which pertained to cultural and social capital. In addition, it also discussed four areas of literature: (a) Latino Students and Higher Education, (b) Students' Experiences with Transition and Influential Factors, (c) Types of Transitional Programs, and (d) Study of Composition and its Relation to Latino Students. Chapter III presented the methodological framework and data analysis for the study, and it also included the role of the researcher, site, and participant selection. Chapter IV discussed the history and description of the IOSS program and referenced a demographic profile of participants and their families; it also addressed the findings of the two data sets of interviews and writing samples. Furthermore, this chapter summarized and discussed the results of the study and addressed the projected contributions to the literature. Thus, the implications for adult education provided an understanding of the importance of cultural and social capital as they relate to adult students learning at the college/university level.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Quoted definition of culturemes is taken from *Review: Anthropological Linguistics: [Fernando] Poyatos* (2002) Editor: Naomi Ogasawara
Contributor: Sherida Altehenger-Smith, International Department, University of Kalsruhe, Germany <http://linguist.org/issues/14/14-1023.html>
- ² The Spanish word *consejos* is translated to mean more than one piece of advice.
- ³ The Enrollment Graph created by Nicholas Silva is a part of the office of IOSS at an anonymous community college.

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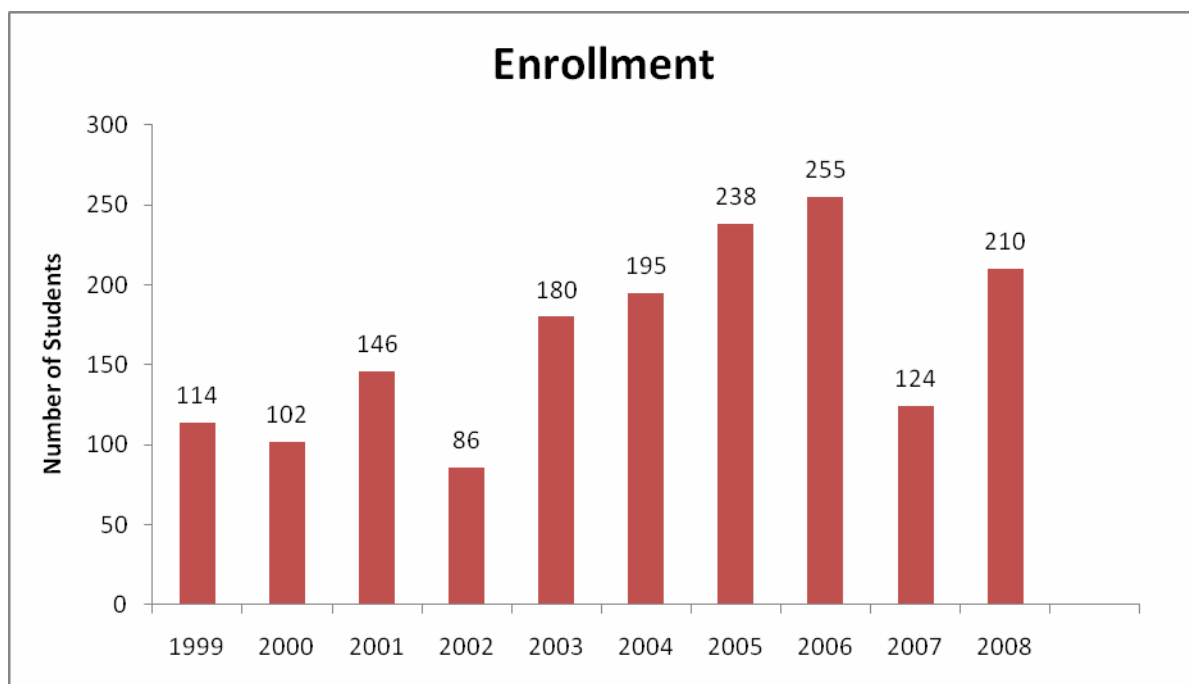
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APPENDIX A**THE INSTITUTE OF STUDENT SUCCESS (IOSS) SUMMER ENROLLMENT**

[IOSS] Summer Enrollment 1999-2008



APPENDIX B

Appendix B contains the following information: Figures B1-B5.

Note. Figures B2 to B4 show the recurrence of themes identified in all three generations.

Figure B1
General Themes with Subgroups

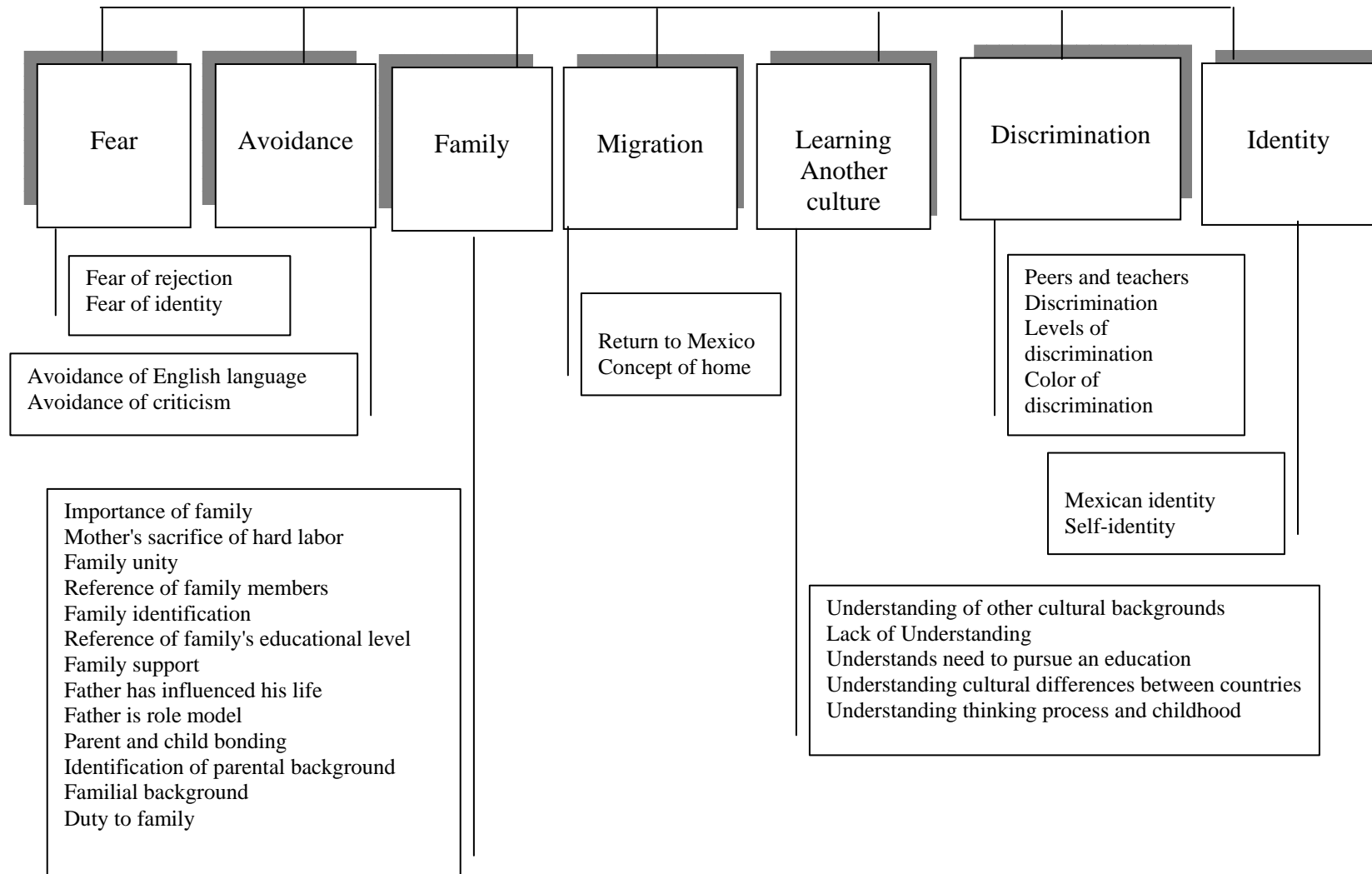


Figure B2

Recurrence of Themes Across Generations: First Generation

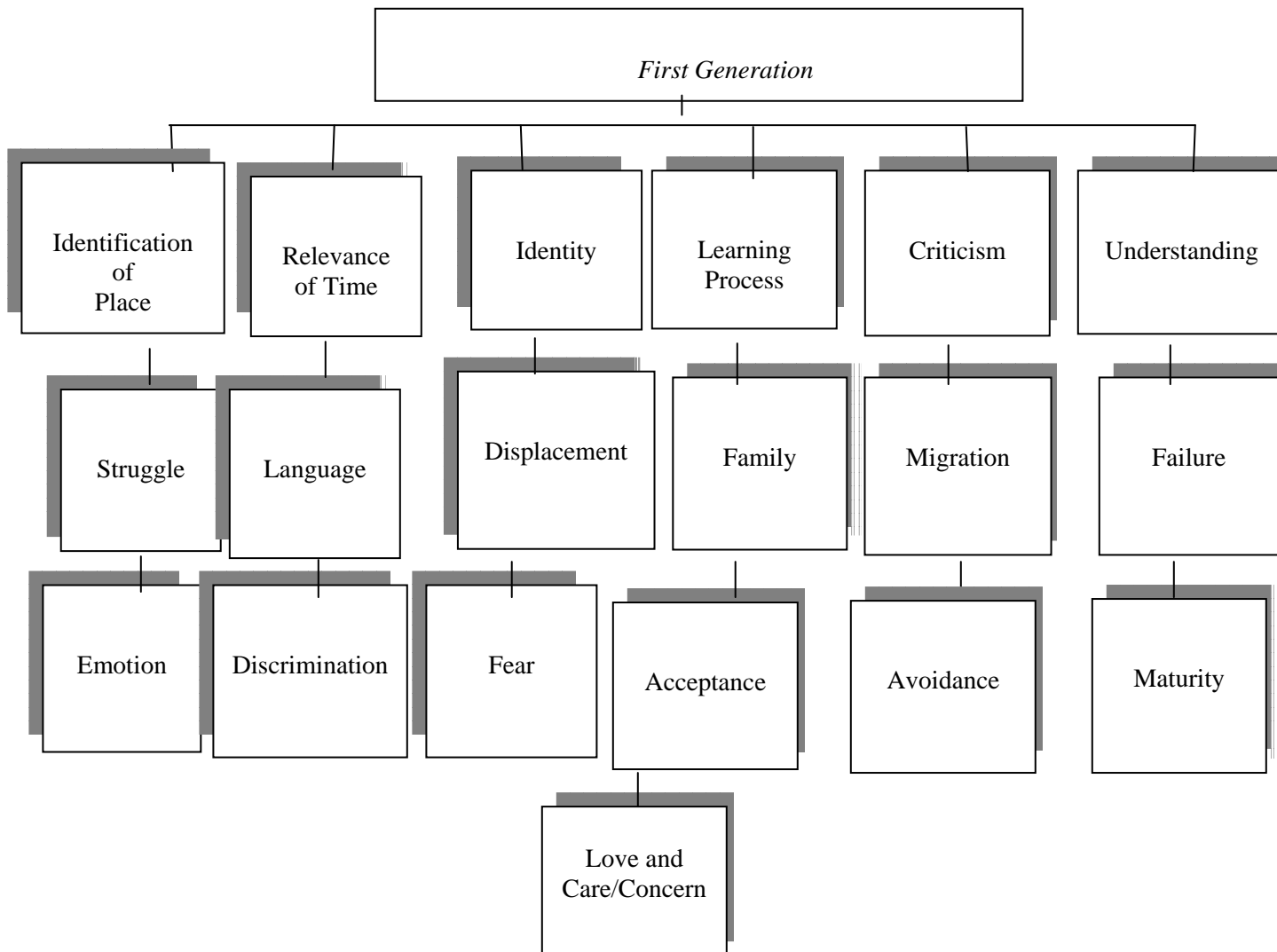


Figure B3

Recurrence of Themes Across Generations: Second Generation

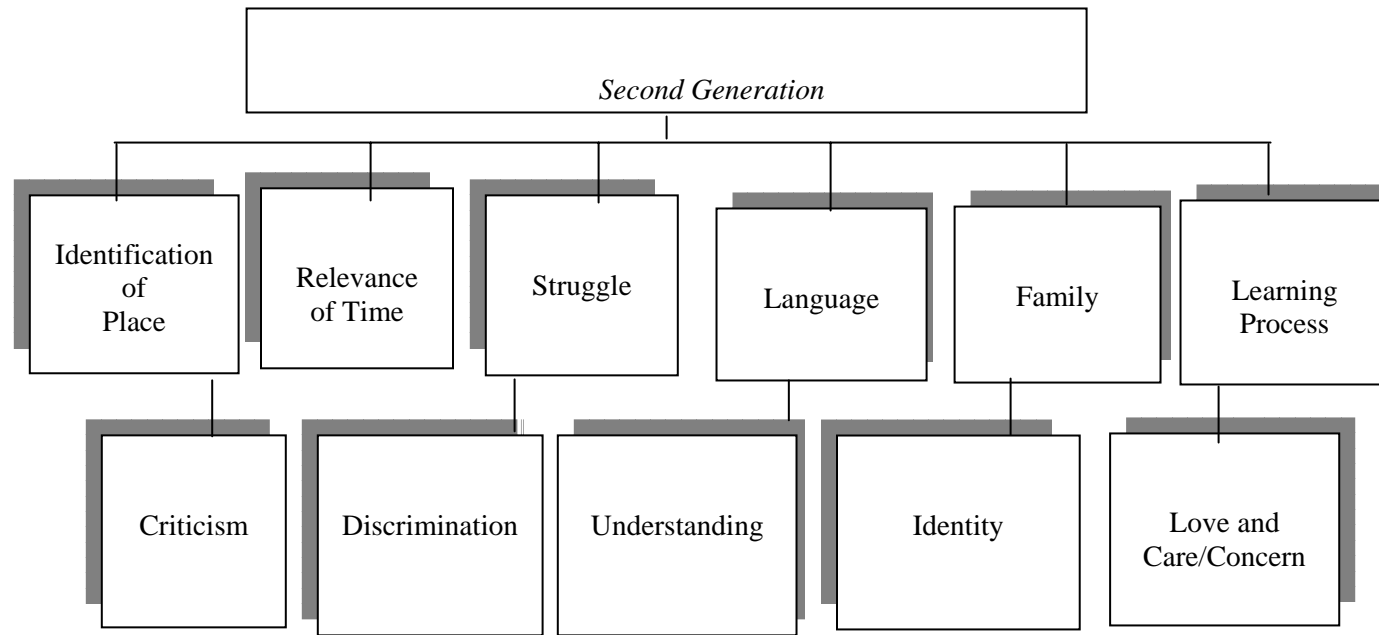


Figure B4

Recurrence of Themes Across Generations: Third Generation

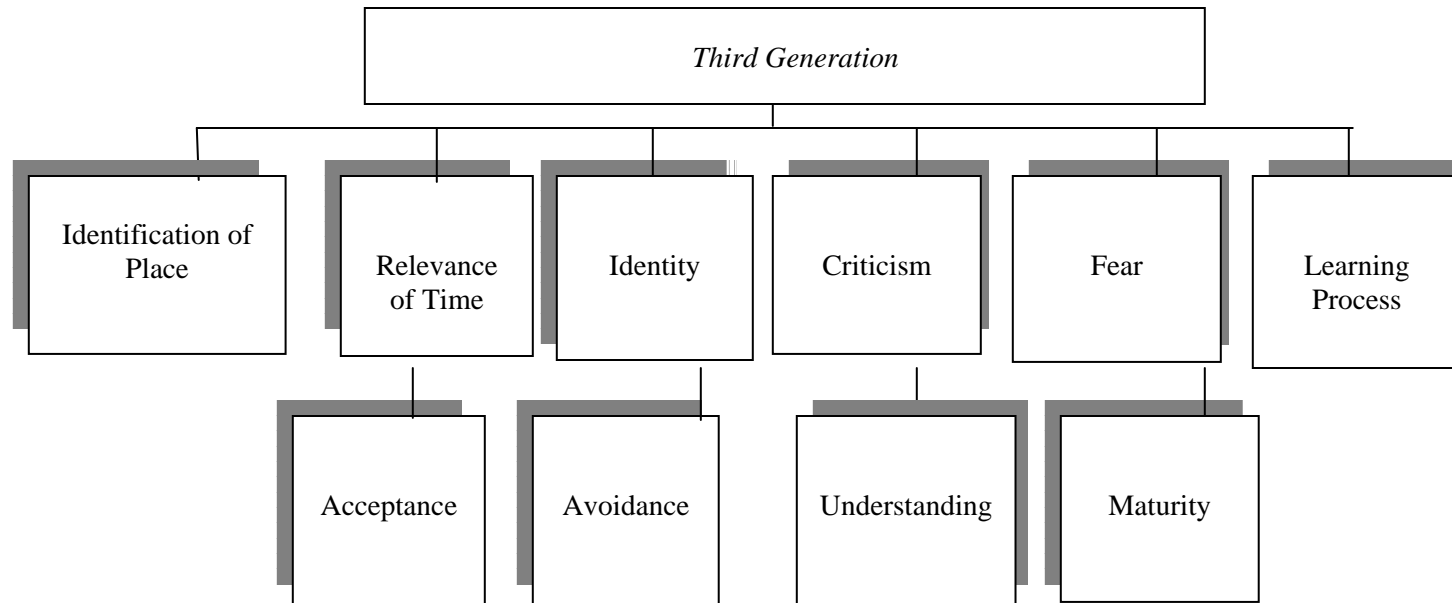
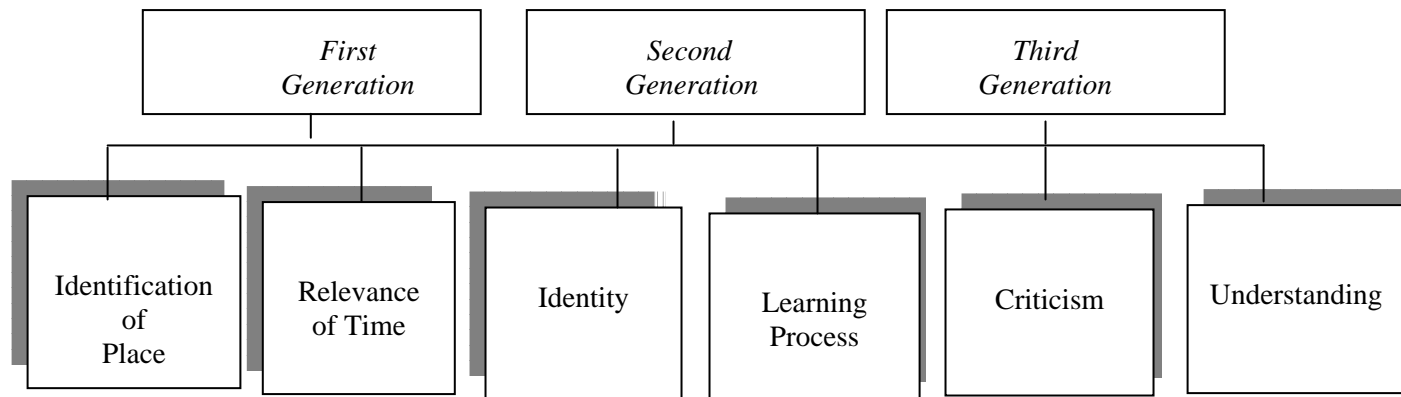


Figure B5

Similarities of Themes Between the Three Generations



APPENDIX C

Appendix C contains the following information: Interview Questions and Responses.

Appendix C

Interview Questions and Responses

Interview Questions

Background

- 1. What type of degree do you want and do you see yourself attaining a graduate degree?**
- 2. Are you a first, second, or third generation Mexican American student?**
- 3. What is the highest level of education in your family and specifically your parents?**
- 4. a) Has anyone influenced your education? b) If yes, please explain how?**
- 5. Explain to me, how do you study for your classes?**
- 6. In class, do you prefer to work by yourself or in groups and explain why do you prefer one to the other?**

Personal Reflections of Writing

- 7. a) Do you enjoy writing? b) Do you fear writing?**
- 8. Describe your writing process: from brainstorming to editing?**
- 9. Do you engage in peer review of the writing of others?**
- 10. What are the difficulties that you encounter or struggle with while writing an essay?**

Institute of Student Success

- 11. a) What were your initial expectations of the IOSS? b) How did you feel after the program ended?**
- 12. a) If given the opportunity to participate in this program once again, would you accept to or not and why? b) Would you recommend this program to other students?**
- 13. If you had not been selected to the IOSS what would be the likelihood of you going to college?**

14. What types of frustrations did you experience with the IOSS?

Interview Student Responses

Question 1

Background: **What type of degree do you want, and do you see yourself attaining a graduate degree?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm, Yes I do. I want to attain a graduate degree in and I plan a Master's degree in ultrasonographer

Katia: Two year college degree in accounting

Alberto: *A bachelor's in biology, I want to be an orthodontist.*

Second Generation

Javier: Well I want a get a Pre-Med degree. I guess what do you call it... biology major and yeah, I want to graduate with a degree.

Interviewer: So you want to get a Bachelor's in Biology and then you want to go to medical school?

Javier: Yeah, I don't know, Isn't supposed to get a Master's degree or you can go direct to Medical School with a Bachelor's?

Interviewer: Yes. You don't have to get a Master's but some people do. You can go right after the Bachelor's.

Leonardo: *An Associates in Electrical Engineering.*

Rosa: *I want to be a registered nurse and receive a bachelor's degree.*

Third Generation

Marina: A bachelor's in journalism

Question 2

Background: **Are you a first, second, or third generation Mexican American student?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm. I'm first generation.

Katia: First generation

Alberto: First generation

Second Generation

Javier: I'm a third generation.

Interviewer: Okay, let me give you the definitions because I think that's incorrect....You are a second-generation Mexican-American. Were you born in San Antonio?

Javier: Yes.

Interviewer: And your parents were born both in Mexico?

Javier: Yes.

Interviewer: Leonardo, You were born in the U.S. of Mexican parents. I just wanted to double check that again.

Leonardo: Yes, ma'am.

Interviewer: So that would make you second generation? Okay, I just wanted to check that.

Rosa: *Second generation*

Third Generation

Marina: Third generation

Question 3

Background: What is the highest level of education in your family and specifically your parents?

First Generation

Lisa: My dad went to the first year of High School (Freshman year) and my mom I think she made it to her Sophomore year her dad died and she had to take over in order to, she made it to her Sophomore year

Interviewer: And is there any other member of your family who attended college?

Lisa: No only uncles on my mom's side.

Katia: *My parents: Father until 10th grade and mother some college*

Alberto: *My sister is a sophomore in college, my parents: my father-4th grade and my mom completed high school.*

Second Generation

Javier: Grade school

Interviewer: For both of them?

Javier: I think so

Interviewer: Relatives?

Javier: I have a few aunts that are teachers they are not here they are in Mexico.

Leonardo: *Middle school for both parents*

Rosa: *For my parents up to elementary school, for the rest of my family up to high school*

Third Generation

Marina: *Both my parents started going to college, some of the relatives have bachelors'*

Question 4

Background: **a) Has anyone influenced your education? b) If yes, please explain how?**

First Generation

Lisa: a) Ummm, My dad has pursued me to reach my goals and to just to keep going forward and b) I have the opportunity that he never had so it's just that basically that he reminds me every morning.

Katia: a) *My parents* b) *Push me to go everyday and I have church support too*

Alberto: a) *Parents* b) *Everyday*

Second Generation

Javier: a) Education, *my mother* so that I can have more in life....

Interviewer: How often does she tell you that?

Javier: b) Everyday

Interviewer: Your father is not living with you?

Javier: No

Interviewer: Has your father been absent for a long time?

Javier: Yes

Interviewer: So it's been your mother who has influenced your education.

Javier: Yes

Leonardo: a) *My dad, he always mentions that if he could have had an education.*
b) *He mentions it off and on*

Rosa: a) *My daughter who is five years old.*
b) *She is the reason why I want to succeed*

Third Generation

Marina: a) *and*
 b) *My parents have encouraged me very often.*

Question 5

Background: **Explain to me, how do you study for your classes?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm, basically after I get out of class, I go to the library and I go over my notes okay, and then I go home and I go over the homework and on my computer if I have to do research to understand something I research it, and study sometimes, it's hard concentrating, but I still try to study.

Interviewer: Why is it hard to concentrate?

Lisa: Ummm, I don't.

Interviewer: Is it just at home or is it here on campus?

Lisa: Ummm, I think it's in campus it's a little bit better because the library is more quiet and it's relaxing and at home it's a little bit hard cause there's things going around and my brother's not quiet...not quiet...so but it's a little bit noisy... yeah and I'm really distracted a lot.

Katia: *I study alone and spend about one to two hours and then I get tutoring from teachers.*

Alberto: *For math, I study an hour or two. For English, I study four hours.*

Second Generation

Javier: *In high school I was in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program, I use a binder and it keeps me organized.*

Interviewer: And what about college?

Javier: *It's a new dimension that I am entering.*

Interviewer: So how are you studying now for your history classes?

Javier: *One hour or less every other day I balance my schedules, try to take it, to organize all my classes, English is easier.*

Leonardo: *I get the homework, and then I study two hours per class per day*

Rosa: *I study for my classes by reading the books and notes, and I spend around 2 hours a day, this is only for English and sociology classes.*

Third Generation

Marina: *I read and study notes, I spend 30-45 minutes longer with history.*

Question 6

Background: **In class, do you prefer to work by yourself or in groups and explain why do you prefer one to the other?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm, it depends on the subject, but I like working in groups can I get other ideas and explain I if I don't get something I can ask questions with them and it kind of helps me understand what is going on a little bit more.

Katia: *I prefer to work alone because of my own opinions.*

Alberto: *I like group work, but depending on the assignment, I like to hear other people's views.*

Second Generation

Javier: *I prefer group work and it helps me develop good communication.*

Leonardo: *I prefer to work in groups, better ideas, prove their point, much easier because other people can support you.*

Rosa: *I prefer to study by myself because I get distracted with groups.*

Third Generation

Marina: *I prefer to be by myself and review.*

Question 7

Personal Reflections of Writing: **a) Do you enjoy writing?** and **b) Do you fear writing?**

First Generation

Lisa: a) Ummm, Yes, I do although I am not really good with in writing I try my best and I need to work a little bit more on my organization and punctuation
b) Sometimes about the clarity and if it's not too clear and I feel like if I'm going to repeat myself again especially on nouns

Katia: a) *Not really*

Interviewer: b) **Student did not respond**

- Alberto: a) *Sometimes, when it is a topic that I like, I like to choose my own topic*
 b) *If it is a major project, a research paper, or essays*

Second Generation

- Javier: a) *I process everything in my mind*
 b) *Just a little*

- Leonardo: a) *Not really, because it takes too much time*

Interviewer: b) **Student did not respond**

- Rosa: a) *No, I have ideas in my head but it takes hours and I don't know the teacher's expectations of my writing.*

Interviewer: b) **Student did not respond**

Third Generation

- Marina: a) *Enjoy*

Interviewer: b) **Student did not respond**

Question 8

Personal Reflections of Writing: **Describe your writing process: from brainstorming to editing?**

First Generation

- Lisa: Ummm....Whenever I get a topic I first ummm make an outline I put the intro, the three paragraphs for the body and the conclusion I usually put ummm.... how many sentences I am going to use next to it and I number them and to have an idea what I am gonna write. I put questions next to it and then according to the questions I write sentences and but then I try to calculate the words I'm gonna have to need. I then go over it read the whole thing, and if I see that it doesn't make sense or if its kind of awkward I fix it punctuate it and check the misspellings. So I type it up.

Interviewer: **So you mentioned an outline, is it a sentence outline or a phrase, word outline?**

- Lisa: It's more like a word outline.

Interviewer: **And when you were writing the questions, like the sentences, you ask the questions first and then you write sentences, right?**

- Lisa: Yeah, Ummm.

Interviewer: **Do you feel pressured to check on the number of words that you are writing?**

- Lisa: Ummm, It depends on how many words they are asking to be. I try to

approximate. I try to expand my writing a little bit more, Ummm.

Katia: *I didn't know how to structure it, and I can't make a clear view of what I'm trying to write. I research the topic, take notes, write the points, make a list, and then I write the whole thing, and write and edit.*

Alberto: *I like to brainstorm ideas. I write an outline, a rough draft, one paragraph at a time, and then I correct, and I also use peer review.*

Second Generation

Javier: *I study the topic and repeat it in my mind, I collect data, and write an outline and then I give my opinion on the writing, and I write a rough draft.*

Leonardo: *Think of a topic to begin with and then I hope they give us an outline, then I write the first draft, and I jot down and make a list of whatever comes to mind*

Rosa: *I research, write points down and copy quotes from sources.*

Interviewer: What type of brainstorming did you use?

Rosa: *An outline and questions and then I write one paragraph to paragraph*

Interviewer: What type of editing do you do?

Rosa: *I spell check, look for fallacies, and review sentence structure.*

Third Generation

Marina: *It comes to mind, and I create an outline and organize in paragraphs all at once. I take sources and add one by one, read through it a couple of times.*

Interviewer: How many exactly?

Marina: *Two to three times.*

Interviewer: Did you use MLA (Modern Language Association) in high school?

Marina: *No*

Question 9

Personal Reflections of Writing: **Do you engage in peer review of the writing of others?**

First Generation

Lisa: *That's one of the things our teacher is making us do, and I usually don't do it but it helps a lot to see the writings of others, and see how they can correct it, and see if I have the same errors as they do or if I can improve*

it or better.

Katia: *No peer review*

Alberto: I do if they ask me, so it is o.k. to review.

Second Generation

Javier: *Yes, with other's people's perspectives, and then I do some more writing, and then I go back and check the teacher's errors.*

Leonardo: Yes, because it helps hearing other point of views.

Rosa: Not really.

Third Generation

Marina: Not really. *I am embarrassed about it. I am scared.*

Question 10

Personal Reflections of Writing: **What are the difficulties that you encounter or struggle with while writing an essay?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm, I tend to do run-ons a little bit. I'm working on that, and a fear of repeating what everybody says, or not getting to the point.

Interviewer: Your initial writing would be the brainstorming?

Lisa: Yes.

Katia: *At times, I am uncomfortable with the beginning, getting the theme, topic, and getting started.*

Interviewer: Did you understand MLA?

Katia: Yes

Alberto: The length, the specific amount of words because I write to the point and I have difficulty elaborating. I was familiar with MLA in high school.

Second Generation

Javier: *My writing comes out strong in my evidence, I gather the information and then I run out of ideas. I also have trouble with the introduction.*

Leonardo: *Coming up with the idea, being persuasive, being clear and staying focused*

Rosa: O.K, with the writing of the thesis, and this includes everything.

Third Generation

Marina: *The organization. I write what I'm thinking.*

Question 11

Institute of Student Success: **a) What were your initial expectations of the IOSS? b) How did you feel after the program ended?**

First Generation

Lisa: a) Ummm, I was expecting a little bit to be kinda more harder then High School okay, a little bit more to put more effort into it

Interviewer: And have you found that it is or it isn't more difficult?

Lisa: Ummm, it's not really that hard I think it's actually easier because there's a lot of tutors here that they help you out. For example, in my math class, my teacher he has ummm, they have office hours where you can go and they can help you out with questions you have ummm before and after class. Something that they usually wouldn't have a lot of in High School

Katia: a) *Getting started and seeing the differences*
b) *It is a good experience*

Alberto: a) It was a good program, I didn't expect it to be so easy, since I always expected college to be a little harder that's what they usually told me. It usually not much of a difference.

Interviewer: How many classes are you taking in the Fall?

Alberto: Four

Interviewer: Four classes

Alberto: b) I felt o.k. after the program ended. It was smooth.

Second Generation

Javier: a) *To learn and get ahead*
b) *Good experience*

Leonardo: a) Okay I guess, what do you refer to?

Interviewer: Remember you had initial expectations and you talked about those initial expectations and you said that back then when we interviewed, you know the classes and it was exciting for you to be a part of the program. How did you feel after the program? Was it worth it and was the program beneficial to you?

Leonardo: Oh, yeah, I thought it was worth it, I got to have classes under my belt and right straight out of High School so I was kind of used to the motion of school and everything so I'm kind of prepared for it.

Interviewer: Would there be anything that you would change from the program?

Leonardo: Probably more hands on maybe the teacher to the students, more Interaction.

Rosa: a) It was more like high school, a little bit
b) Better, I know what college is like now.

Third Generation

Marina: a) I really didn't have any expectations, I knew it was going to be kind of hard,
b) I learned a lot

Question 12

Institute of Student Success: **a) If given the opportunity to participate in this program once again, would you accept to or not and why? b) Would you recommend this program to other students?**

First Generation

Lisa: a) Ummmm, I would because so far it has helped me kind of to get an idea of what I'm expected to do in the Fall and most of all it has pushed me a little bit to not do the same errors whenever I start again.

Interviewer: b) Would you recommend this program to other students?

Lisa: Yes, definitely, it's a lot of help. It gives you an idea of what college is and you get familiar with the campus too, with students, teachers, the building centers.

Interviewer: So you feel it has given you a good orientation?

Lisa: Yes

Katia: a) *Yes*
b) *Yes, because you learn new things*

Alberto: a) Yes
b) It helps you take the remedial classes in the summer—I took remedial math.

Second Generation

Javier: a) *Yes*

Leonardo: a) Yes

b) Yes, because it let's the high school students get their feet wet.

Rosa: a) Yes, because it was fun, and no financial *problems, I had* help with *the IOSS coordinator*

b) Yes, I would recommend *the program*

Third Generation

Marina: a) Yes

b) I would recommend it to others.

Question 13

Institute of Student Success: **If you had not been selected to the IOSS what would be the likelihood of you going to college?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm, I would of ummm, applied for Fall, but before this didn't think I was going to College right after graduation and I actually wanted to have a some time to rest and then go again and return, but it would take a little bit longer. I don't thing it would have been as constant as it is going to be now.

Interviewer: So would you have taken some time to rest or to work?

Lisa: To work, yes, help out the family, but just get a break from school

Katia: *I would have attended in the fall.*

Alberto: I would still come in the fall.

Second Generation

Javier: *I would attend in the fall*

Leonardo: *100%*

Rosa: I would still come in the fall.

Third Generation

Marina: I still would have gone to college.

Question 14

Institute of Student Success: **What types of frustrations did you experience with the IOSS?**

First Generation

Lisa: Ummm...I'm not really used to having homework a lot everyday so basically there's a lot of homework due the next day... and I have to be doing homework ummm... everyday and staying up doing research and doing other homework ... and I a little bit gotten behind in my math subject so.

Interviewer: Because of the amount of homework?

Lisa: Yes and also because I am not really used to it and I get really distracted by anything, but it has helped me to keep kind of manage the time I have.

Katia: *I had to do homework everyday and it was a big change.*

Alberto: Nothing really

Second Generation

Javier: *I struggled with history.*

Leonardo: *The writing, the scheduling of courses, and with financial aid.*

Rosa: No frustrations.

Third Generation

Marina: At first, I did not hear about it and my dad made more money than the financial aid requirement, but then I was granted a scholarship.

APPENDIX D
RESEARCH PAPERS

Appendix D

Research Papers

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Term Paper

The terrorism attack in September 11 2001 where “nearly 3000 of our people were killed” (Burns) was the start of various explosion problems dealing with war, death and economic issues. The reasons of the attacks in New York and an attempt in Washington are not one-hundred percent clear; for the most part, the whole nation instantly was affected by the decisions made, when Bush called for war. The American troops were sent to fight against terrorism, capture bin Laden and destroy Al Qaeda, “because it is dominated by a number of former warlords, the Afghan government is rife with corruption” (Is the Afghan) we have been fighting for more than five-year now and have not stopped corruption on this long what are the hopes that it will end soon. Many soldiers have lost their life and left children without a mom, dad or family member. Traveling Muslims and Arabs, are affected as well as Americans, children and women living in Afghanistan. Civilians live under poor health conditions and sometimes are killed accidentally being innocent. My consideration is for the US to be concerned of the families being affected, resolve the terrorism conflict with less bombing and killing and bring the troops back home as soon as possible “sending more troops there would only fan the flames of violence” (Is The Afghan).

I completely agree with Obama and believe that he should take his own word seriously his strategy “is to set clear goals for a war gone awry to get the American people behind them, to provide them more resources and to make a better case for international support.” (Burns) but, even though he has a good plan in mind the question is how many innocent lives will go along with it in that time period? “American troops suffered the most losses in the 2008 since the start of Afghanistan war” (in 2008) We have heard many statements like this; and sound familiar to Bush's arguments and plans, but the conflict is whether or not he will carry on with his plan, “Some 70000 foreign troops are already deployed in Afghanistan under NATO auspices.” (In 2008). The number of death rise higher and higher and it's become something so usual and common. What is there to say about the life of innocents who are killed in Afghanistan. According to a report made by Porter there was an estimate of 26 Afghan innocent civilians killed, accidentally, how many more accidents are we going to let slip by till the war ends. Porter talks about how many bombs have been launched and in several attempts on trying to hit the target they have missed and or destroyed nearby buildings or houses. A “report confirms that no insurgent fighters were killed in the airstrikes which killed very large numbers of civilians.” (Porter)

I believe, creating more war and killing more Taliban fighters is not going to stop terrorism. The Taliban are a group mixture of Mujahedeen who fought against a soviet invasion in the 1980 and a group of Pashtun. The Taliban took control of the Afghanistan capital, Kabul, in 1996. The Taliban have been wanting to attack and gain full control of Afghanistan; the U.S on the other hand has been protecting Afghanistan. "Much like Iraq, the war effort in Afghanistan has been longer and costlier than American leaders expected." (Burns). The destruction of the Taliban's will take months or up to many years. This group might field more than thousand fighters in which astonishing most of them are suicide bombers. They are not afraid to die and kill innocent victims, and are ready to die any minute if they feel or think they are being fulminated about the decisions they take.

Some victims affected are the Arabs and Muslims that travel as well as students here in the US. Muslims and Arabs are being discriminated as to think that they may be a terrorist or a suicide bomber. There was an incident in New York where Nicole Colson writes about an Arab family who was forced to get off the airplane and be interrogated and checked to see if they had any bombs with them. "Despite being cleared by the FBI, AirTran refused to allow the family to book another flight" (Nicole Colson). They had been judged by their clothing and appearance, which is a Muslim tradition for men to have long beards and the women who wore headscarves. In the end they were asked for an apology; which will not take back the humiliation, "the airline's attitude could only be described as half-hearted" (Nicole Colson). This type of discrimination is a for Muslims and Arabs who have to put up with; it's not their fault but have to live day by day with it.

It is considered that children in Afghanistan are the most affected worldwide. The poor medical help they have is not good enough to cure children with wounds in their body. They are getting infected with diseases and slowly dying. Young boys are trained to be suicide bombers without their consent being taken in consideration; an article written by Abawi explains the story of a 14-year-old who was trained to kill without even asked if he wanted to. This boy of a short age was already being prepared to die and not having a chance to say bye to his parents he said "I miss my parents, mom and dad," (Abawi). It seems to me that they are putting at risk the life of these innocent kids more than before when they were in the hands of the Taliban. The rate of child mortality is rising higher than before making it. Boys like him are captured and brought to cells where other boys share a room "Shakirullah shares this place with 10 other boys" (Abawi) and again these places are not the healthiest, with uncomfortable beds and few electricity when available. Incredibly unbelievable kids this age and are being treated as adults when they are just victims of this war. There is not much being done since there are many in need of help that they take long to deal with a patient and many times it's too late and there's nothing to do about the matter. These children are not having the opportunity to be kids and enjoy their childhood like many other kids around the world. They don't reflect any kind of happiness in their hearts but instead sadness, pain and confused of what's going and happening around them.

Women are also greatly affected by the war. Because there is no such law that protect the women they are abused in many ways. "Violence against women come in the

form of rape”(Report) They really have no voice and especially young women most of them in their teen age years are abused and sold to men twice their age. The women who are pregnant suffer a lot especially during this time period, they loose their baby due to a bad contractions and their life is hanging by a thread and loose their lives. They are highly physically abuse by men or the once they are sold to, “many individuals who have been accused of rape and other crimes have avoided prosecution because or their government connections”(Is the Afghan). If this is still going on then what is the US Army doing as far as the protection for women. Security is very low and their life is expose to harm, “so these are the issues that are all born by this lack of security where women have no place in... security decision.” (Report) Forasmuch as women are not allow to work , read or learn anything .the only thing they can do is have hope that they life long enough to make it though each day for the coming day where it will all be all over and have their liberation.

There has been shelters built for refugees in which many are very far to get to and have less help than in Pakistan . There are places where women are not welcome and are forced to leave, leaving those in need of medical assistance in pain. “We have to leave the area because security is getting worse day by day”(Report). Young men around the ages of twelve are trained to be suicide bomber’s. Schools, where this acts are taking places, should be located; closed and take the trainers to jail. The young teen boys would have to take special classes to show them and teach them that its not correct to kill innocent people. Having a secure and safe place will decrease violence and help bring back the troops home soon. “The United States is to pull its forces out of Iraqi cities by June 2009 and end its military presence by the end of 2011 under a deal between Baghdad and Washington that grants Iraqi authorities more control over security operations” (In 2008). In this matter the US soldiers will be far away from harm then before and the life of innocents will decrease as well. We are there to help, reconstruct and enforce the law “he is sending hundreds of US. civilians_ agricultures specialists, educators and engineers to help a poor, broken country to build itself up from the provincial level!”(Burns), but don’t forget that they are a whole different country and a little help is no harm to anyone but we must let them do the rest.

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Recognizing Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been a huge issue in the United States for many years. It has caused many injuries to many women and to many, even death. It is a serious problem that needs to be solved. It may take a really long time, but it is worth the effort. The domestic violence that occurs in the United States can be decreased by improving the organizations that help those that experience this kind of abuse.

Three years ago, when I was only fifteen, I experienced domestic violence. I was in a violent relationship from day one. He never respected me and always made me feel as if I were not worth a thing. I thought I was in love, and being in love meant staying with that person until we both grew old and died. He was older than me by two years, so I thought he knew what a relationship was supposed to be like. He began tell me what to wear and what not to wear. He would pull my hair if he saw me looking at a guy. He would beat me if I talked to a guy friend or even just a cousin. He began to be very controlling over my life. He got to the point where I could not even talk to my own family members. My mother would tell me, endless of times, that he was not a good guy. I never listened to her because I thought she didn't know what she was saying.

Six months after we got together, I made the worst decision of my life. I moved in with him. In the beginning, we were both very happy and everything was going great between us. Then, everything changed. He would come from work annoyed and he would take his anger out on me. He would hit me if I didn't have dinner ready or if the house was not the way he wanted it to be. I never thought anything of it because I loved him. I thought it was my fault for not doing my everyday duties. Things were getting very abusive and I let it happen. The day I walked out on him was the day I realized that I was better than him.

Many women feel that domestic violence is normal. They are blinded by love and it causes them to not think clearly. They feel that getting beat is a way of affection. Another percentage of women, that are mothers, feel that staying with their partner will bring a joy of happiness to their children. DeJonge, et al.states that "about 20-64% of all violence against women is from romantic partners, and more than half of the women experiencing IPV live with children under age 12." The women are afraid to leave these kinds of situations because they feel they will ruin their children's lives by separating from their father. Kytja Weir states that "[m]any people blame women for not leaving abusive relationships, Schneider says, but the fail to see that battered women often fear

becoming destitute or losing custody of their children.” Women have to live with fear of losing their children as well.

Domestic violence is also known to be the leading cause of injury to women in the United States. Clara Dalton acknowledges that, “if you look at the most recent statistics from the Justice Department, the number of women dying in the domestic-violence situations hasn’t changed. The problem is as widespread as ever” (qtd. in Feinberg). Many women are too afraid to seek for help. They are afraid to leave, but when they decide to leave it might be too late for some of them. They might not make it out of the relationship alive.

Domestic violence is a nationwide threat that will harm families as well. The children that live under a house filled with violence are more at risk of repeating the cycle: “Children who are abused or witness abuse are at a higher risk of abusing their own family and significant other as an adults as well as long-term physical and mental problems” (Feinstein). The violence that occurs is unhealthy to everyone around it, not just the victim. In Feinstein’s article she states that, “[d]omestic violence remains a pervasive threat to the fabric of America’s families and the well-being of America’s future.”

Dianne Feinstein states that, “[f]orty percent of girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend, and approximately one in five female high school students report physical or sexual abuse by a dating partner.” The issue is a very huge problem that needs to be solved here in the United States. The many organization that exist today need to be more involved in the community. They to be trained to help those that are mentally and physically ill. The organizations need to spend more time with victims to help them understand that life is not over. They can renew their lives and live a happier life. The organizations should be able to increase their visibility and presence in the community. A lot of women do not know that there are organizations that will help you run away from situations like domestic violence. That is why organizations should make a better effort in helping those people out.

Domestic violence is not the answer to happiness. The United States should recognize this problem more. If we don’t end this problem soon, the number of victims of domestic violence will increase. Love shouldn’t stop people from running away from a situation that may be deadly to victims and their family. Be smart and run away from it before it’s too late.

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New Life

The transition from high school to college can be extremely difficult, and some students might crack under all the stress, but the key is to manage our time well. As a college freshman, I have experienced the transition from high school to college firsthand. During high school, I did not have a choice whether I wanted to go to school or not. It was mandatory and my parents expected me to go everyday because they did not want the school districts police knocking at our door, or me having to go to court because of my attendance. The United States government made my public education free and mandatory. On the other hand, once I entered college, everything changed. Now I was responsible for my own education.

When I first enrolled at college, I was introduced to a little thing called "tuition and fees." Stephen Avard, in "The Financial Knowledge of College Freshman," states that, "Texas high school graduates who are enrolled in their first year of college will not have an effective understanding of basic financial concepts dealing with savings, investments, and risks" (16). I can honestly say that he is right because I, never having managed so much money before, was somewhat confused, and did not know what to do with it. Another thing that I was introduced to was the idea that college is voluntary. That meant that mommy and daddy would not be there anymore making me get up for school. It was up to me if I went to class or not. It feels nice having the power to choose whether I would use my time going to class or going out with friends.

During high school it is easy to befriend classmates since we are most likely going to have the same people around for the four years. With my friends, I would usually go bowling, to the movies, or to the infamous high school parties where underage drinking was found. However, after walking the stage, the friendships made in the past years might have ended. Friends will follow different paths that will guide them towards their future.

While in college making friends might not be as simple as it was in high school. In college, everyone has a different attitude and is more mature, so making conversations might be difficult. Nevertheless, friends are something we are going to need in college if we want to survive. Our professor will tell us, if we are going to miss class, then get the work from another student. The best advice is to, "Try to meet more new people...With hard work, academics, will take care of themselves, but you only have four years to

spend with the new, long-life friends” (5). Once a freshman settles down in college, he or she might be looking forward to the college parties. Just like in high school, underage drinking is present in college parties. One has to be careful when choosing what type of parties to attend, and who to have as friends. If our best friend is a party animal, it might make it a little difficult to concentrate in our studies. The people we meet here are very important “you are on your own for the first time, the friends you make in college become like a surrogate family. And those bonds tend to be lasting ones” (Colino).

While in high school, most of us had curfews, if there was school the next day. Our parents were our guardians. They decided if we could or could not go places and sometimes who the people we hanged around with. Our lives were pretty much controlled by our parents. Once in college, we enter a world of full independence. In an article for the *San Antonio Express News*, Daryl Bell wrote that, “From academics to social life there will come a time when a student will be placed in a situation he or she is not used to” (3). This “do what we want” feeling is different for many of us, but it is something that we will get used to. Even though we can do whatever we feel like doing, we still have to make time for school. Time is our biggest problem. Until now we had our life under a schedule, but now, with all this freedom, we do not know what to do. Dr. Whiney, counselor at San Antonio College said, “The biggest problem freshman face, is managing their time, and time is money.” So what he advised is to keep a daily planner. That once we start following it, it will become normal, and we will get used to the change.

The transition to college can be a tough one for many students. But, “Don’t give up. Give things time. It takes a while to get used to the work, quiet time, and food” (Rauf 1).

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The War in Afghanistan

The war in Afghanistan is viewed as a crisis in our society, many lives have suffered tremendous changes or so it must be stopped now. This war in the middle East has involved many Americans throughout the decade. It's shocking to discover how hostile Afghanistan has become to our troops. Clearly some politicians want to let the war continue, but the rest of the citizens in the United States are smart enough to say "no we had enough".

Though many have opposed the war it has blinded them from the progress the U.S. has made over there. Many cities in Afghanistan have been given the opportunity to experience our democracy which represents freedom. Hopefully our influence has helped their government make better decisions for the people. It all just seems that it was yesterday I heard the news that two airplanes struck the twin towers in New York City. What a nightmare that day turned for many Americans. Bin Laden has been the United States target to capture and convict. This sadistic man has been a very hard target for the U.S. to find. Since 2001 we tried to bring harmony and peace back into our society, but still an answer hasn't appeared recently to invade a Taliban stronghold so we could bring that site out of chaos (Maddux). The enemy was defeated in that battle, but everyone knew the war was far from being over. The important reason for the operation was to establish a permanent ISAF (NATO) presence in the area to counter any further destruction in the southern area of Afghanistan. The U.S. military along with the assistance of other nations have used tactics like this to battle the resistance of Al-Qaeda and try to take the land back which belongs to the peaceful citizens of Afghanistan. General Jones was appointed by the U.S. president to hunt down top Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud in South Waziristan (Maddux). Taliban's like Baitullah are criminals that know no boundaries to the killings they commit on the innocent. President Obama has deployed 21,000 additional U.S. troops and trainers in southern and eastern Afghanistan as part of his new strategy to fight the enemy (Maddux). This theory of fighting has been used for long time, but even though we see some results, the terrorist still find ways to deteriorate some of the positive things the United States done. This cycle can't continue because we are still not solving issues with the war. It's important to know when to change your plans for the future benefit of our troops and the Afghanistan civilians.

Recently many problems have risen from Afghanistan especially over its foreign policy. Because of the absence of the necessary skills. "real enemies of Afghanistan have continuing their interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs" take advantage.

Afghanistan is a country that doesn't trust other countries because of their history of political leaders who made controversial decision for the country. This war is the perfect example of my point, Bin Laden who had tremendous stroke of power in Afghanistan made the United States eight years ago feel his power. Right now its civilians are still not sure what kind of future lies for them. Kabul the capital of the country has limited their relationship with America, Great Britain and the other western countries to the war on terror (Rah-e Nejat). That is an important fact to speak of, to further understand the nature of the Middle East. We as Americans give in to friendly treaties with other people, but Afghanistan as country is quite the opposite. Its geographical body makes it even better to learn why they are isolated to their neighbors even though the gap between them is non-existent. The hostility that it creates with countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and other countries is purely visible. Throughout the animosity Afghanistan as of late wants to be a nation with power, so they have let their guard down by trying to expand economic ties with China and Russia. The new U.S. president Barack Obama has seen many flaws in the government of Afghanistan on some occasions, "Obama seriously criticized the Afghan government and even called it a narcotic government" (Rah-e Nejat). The implication being that he really is upset on how it is structured to function clearly with all of these problems this foreign country is facing I ask myself and others,

To some of the residents that live in Afghanistan we are viewed as invaders who are trespassing on their homeland. Al-Qaeda has made sure that our presence brings a negative perception on the eyes of others. Have the U.S. troops who came to defeat the enemy and protect & served the people of Afghanistan become the real monster? That's an important question. A reporter from Wardak province in Afghanistan, Sayed Karim writes about how the residents' enjoyed their peaceful lives before the troops started to arrive. A small percentage of people are happy about the war because the majority wants the troops out (Dave Markland). That is the reality of the many issues of the war. Jamila is also a civilian from Wardak who hates the foreign soldiers besides the Taliban. The war has affected her family in many aspects of their lives. Her husband and kids must travel long distances to their job and school because of the hostilities of the war. She tells a reporter, "The foreigners should leave the country because it's not just me-no one likes them" (Dave Markland). It's surprising to me as a U.S. citizen to learn this about the war. Clearly we haven't taken risks that contribute to the safety of the residents of Afghanistan. Another case that really blew my mind away was from Ghrana a 13-year old girl that unfortunately an accidental U.S. bombing has destroyed her family's life. She blames U.S. troops for the death of her relatives that includes her mother. Emotionally if that wasn't enough to digest, physically she has been changed forever because she lost her right leg and much of her left arm in one of the peacefully on the streets, like if they were savage animals. Her uncle, Ahmed Abed is taking care of her now, even he feels the same way her niece expresses herself about U.S. troops by saying "The Americans know who is a Taliban and who is innocent, but they don't care" (Dave Markland). Are we spreading the right message of freedom? It's shocking to hear a story about a little girl who has possibly lost everyone she cared about in a war that's supposed to make people like her feel safe and secure. What I understand is they don't feel safe

around U.S troops. Do we need to change some of our military leaders to reduce less innocent blood shed? Sadly, I think we need to change more than that because the pain being felt over there brings guilt to my mind. As I read more about the article from Dave Markland, he talks about how the people from Afghanistan want to fight the Taliban's on their own to take back their land. They recognize some of their errors, so they want to solve the problems themselves without any help. Middle East people think U.S troops have done enough damage to Afghanistan that automatic withdraw from forces is necessary.

Al-Queda is our main enemy that we are trying to extinguish. The American movement has captured many of it's associates, but the United States still doesn't have the correct numbers that may still be in the open freedom causing pain and suffering. Many hundreds of those men are ready to attack and destroyed the lives of others, who knows maybe they might be plotting another attack on U.S soil. Of relatives that gone to fight and lost their lives. Our strategy against the enemy has to be re-enforced with a good plan so that our troops can strike them in one last fatal blow that will make them surrender, so everything can be brought back to normal.

This war has engaged two different nations from cultural and political values together for almost a decade. Many innocent people have paid the ultimate sacrifice to end the chaotic war between U.S forces and Al-Queda. One big question that I still don't understand why is Osama Bin Ladden causing so much suffering to the United States and Afghanistan, what is the motive for all this senseless violence. Does it bring joy to his heart seen others dying for the actions he committed ever since September 11, 2001. It will be important to find a resolution by President Barack Obama to put an end to the terrorism of Bin Ladden and Al-Queda. Also if the reports are indeed true about some of the U.S soldiers causing harm to the poor Afghanistan civilians, justice must be served according to the law. Harmony must be found so that every nation that's involved in the war can go back to normal. Everyone must take a step forward so that our families can have a better and much safer tomorrow.

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 July 2, 2009

College Students' Problems

What do you think are some problems that college students are facing? Do you think there are solutions for these problems? Most of the problems college students have in today's world are economic problem, as well as the work given in classes. This research paper will help find some solutions to these problems.

Some of the problems that college students as well as I have to face are the classes itself (weekly test, response papers, essays). All these things can bring stress to a person and may even make people lose weight. It is also interesting that the economy is affecting college students. These are the people who are just a few years away from helping run this country and the recent economic situation is holding them back. The amount of money we have to pay to attend college. "The tuition-setting season is upon us again. More than in previous years, our springtime announcements will be closely watched even by the general public...but college costs continue to soar well beyond inflation (O'Keefe)." Also gas prices are another problem, because not everyone can afford to live on campus.

A way that I can solve some of the problems in class is if I simply study more, "those who do the work, as assessed by exams, papers, or whatever other measures teachers may use, are rewarded according to official theory by higher grades (Schman, et al.)." Reading more books, taking more notes and staying focus in class. If I would start to stress out, I'd take a break or visit a study hall. For the financial problems I can fill out my FAFSA, "Because student financial aid is a means of increasing access to higher education, its importance to community colleges has increased dramatically since they first entered the financial aid system in the 1970s (Rifkin, McKinney)." A federal form required from all students seeking need-based financial aid. The FAFSA collects family income and other financial information and is completed and filed by the student or his/her family. Also I can sign up for scholarships that would be able to help me out in paying for college.

With all of the problems in the economy and in the class, college students are still trying to pursue their education. Attending college should be something that everyone gets an equal chance to do no matter what their financial status or their ability to do work. the economy may be in deep trouble right now but there is still hope for those who want to start their adult life and get a chance to turn this economy around for the best.

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 June 29, 2009

Overcoming Single Parenthood Dilemma

One evening, as I sat in front of the computer doing my homework, I noticed someone's eyes on me. When I looked around, I saw my four year old daughter sitting on the floor across the room. She had a saddened look on her face, which was awkward because she is always happy. When I asked her what was wrong, she told me she wished I didn't go to school because I spend too much time on school than her. As a single mother, I have faced challenges/difficulties and realize the solution would be obtaining a college degree for a better future.

Raising a child on one's own can be stressful. I have raised my daughter by myself since the age of thirteen, without support or any help from my daughter's father, which puts pressure on me. Elaine M. Eshbaugh, a professor at the University of Northern Iowa, notes that, "Among Latina adolescent teen mothers, partner support has been shown to be a predictor of mental well-being" (339). Elaine M. Eshbaugh adds that, "Latina teen mothers may be expected to marry or live with the father of their child. Deviating from these norms may cause conflict and stress" (341). My family comes from a culture where marriage is expected and in my situation, marriage didn't happen. This made me feel out of place, it made me feel I was being judged by all who surrounded me. There has been moments when I feel stressed because the extra help from a partner is absent. I am obligated to take the role of mother and father in my child's life. To me, this is difficult to fulfill because I have many others roles to take as well. I am a mother, daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, friend and a student.

Unfortunately, due to my economic status, relying on financial assistance has become part of my life. The author of the article, "Update: Teen Pregnancy", reports that, "According to a study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, teens raising children cost taxpayers \$9.1 billion in 2004". It is saddening to know that my child and I are part of this statistic but I do not have any other choice since I come from a single mother and low-income household. Aurora P. Jackson, a Professor of Social Welfare, asserts that, "Lack of education is likely to constrict opportunities for jobs paying higher wages, which might, in turn, be associated with less stable employment and greater likelihood of receiving welfare benefits..." (270). My mother only had a 3rd grade education and the only job she has been able to obtain is a home care provider for the elderly. It is a low paying job that does not provide enough money for our basic necessities. We receive food and health care benefits from the government and my mother must make ends meet in order to pay for rent, utilities and clothing.

Lee SmithBattle, a Professor of Nursing at Saint Louis University, claims that, "The popular press and professional literature have described teen pregnancy as the

beginning of a downward spiral that includes dropping out of school, depending on welfare or minimum wage jobs. And remaining single, poor mothers” (409). I no longer want to form part of these facts nor do I want my daughter to experience the hardships I did, and a practical solution for my situation is to obtain a college degree. Although, it was not an easy thing to do, the first step taken towards my solution was graduating from high school. I graduated on June 7, 2009 with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 and under the recommended graduation program. The next step is getting that college degree. The cost of tuition for college is \$449 for a part-time student and \$781 for a full-time student. Additional costs include books which can range from \$20 to \$300, all depending on the courses taken, basic school supplies, and testing materials. I am eligible to attend college because I qualified for financial aid and won \$2,300 in scholarships for the Fall semester. To receive financial aid financial need must be demonstrated, a high school diploma or GED certificate is required, and must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen. I am currently enrolled in San Antonio college as freshman and my goal is to become a Registered Nurse. I chose the medical field because it is a good paying job and it is a field that is not suffering the economic crisis at this time. I expect to complete my academic courses in two years and complete the Nursing Program in an additional two years, which results in total of four years.

It was not easy completing the first step and the second step will not be any easier. I am aware that I must face many obstacles in the process of reaching the solution. I find child care difficult to obtain for the summer since the prices are costly. Benjamin Grove, a staff writer for KSAT, reports that, “[P]arents of school-age children pay up to \$8,600 a year for part-time care in a center, according to NACCRRA.” Benjamin Grove adds that, “A full-time nanny typically earns \$350 to \$1,000 a week, and part-time nannies charge roughly \$7 to \$20 an hour, according to the International Nanny Association.” These amounts of money are something I can not afford, which drove me to seek child care in a family member. My oldest sister not only cares for my child while I am at college, but she also tries to provide transportation for me the majority of the time. Otherwise, I take the VIA bus or catch a ride with a friend.

Single parenthood dilemma does not have to be the same anymore. Single parents now have the choice of obtaining an education, they no longer have to be part of statistics or facts. When I begin to feel that reaching my solution might be impossible, I look across the room at the spot where my daughter sat that evening, and smile. I rather have her tell me I spend too much time on school, than to tell me that I spend too much time on a low-paying job.

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Marina
English 1301
Instructor A
6 July 2009

Drug Legalization: Not the Solution to a Better Society

What grabbed my attention about the subject of drug legalization, was a book written by Beatrice Sparks entitled *Go Ask Alice*. It is a nonfiction book which is based on the life of young teenage girl who becomes overwhelmed not only by drugs, but also by the world in which the drugs take her. It gives an uncensored view at the danger and hardships that a person has to go through once they take that step into the world of drugs. In the book, the author describes a scene in which the girl and her friend take heroin, only to wake up and realize that both the girl and her friend take heroin, only to wake up and realize that both the girl and her friend have been raped by two people who they thought were their friends. The author describes the details of her life as she becomes increasingly addicted to drugs, only to be pulled right back in. There are also several passages in which the author describes the suffering that the girl is going through, including times where the girl even contemplates suicide. In one passage in particular, she talks about wishing she could die from an overdose. It was only two years after she started doing drugs that she died of an overdose; however it is not specified whether it is so important that we don't allow drugs to be legalized.

Lots of people argue that the legalization of drugs could be a good thing. These people, sometimes referred to as pro-drug advocacy groups, believe that legalizing drugs will take the allure out of buying and selling drugs because it will no longer be a thing that is considered illegal. Instead, it would just become another thing that could be purchased like that of food or water. It could also be said that legalizing drugs could bring down the crime rate, but in reality being under the influence of drugs actually leaves a greater risk for accidental overdose, crimes committed under the influence, and in the worst case scenarios, events of rape under the influence. Also, there are already so many people struggling with drug addictions, that legalizing drugs would only increase the number of addictions. Drug Watch International states an important fact by saying that "the legalization of decriminalization of drugs would make harmful, psychoactive, and addictive substances affordable, available, convenient, and marketable. It would expand the use of drugs. It would remove the social stigma attached to illicit drug use and would send a message of tolerance for drug use, especially to youth" (Drug Watch). Considering that drugs have already had such a negative impact on so many people's lives, it would be unwise to allow the legalization of drugs. Perhaps one of the most important issues surrounding the legalization of drugs is the crime rate factor. Believers in the legalization of drugs argue that legalizing drugs will help decrease the crime rate among drug users, but in reality legalizing drugs will only further the crime epidemic. Drug Watch International states, "A study of international drug policy and its effects on countries has shown that countries with lax drug law enforcement have had an increase

in drug addiction and crime. Conversely, those with strong drug policies have reduced drug use and enjoy low crime rates” (Drug Watch). Dupoint, a “veteran drug warrior” supports this fact by stating that “what [drug users] need, he says, is a solid reason to quit, and getting arrested is enough to scare many people straight” (Katel 6). This shows that if drugs were to be legalized, then laws that would have once stopped people from purchasing drugs, out of fear that they would be arrested, would no longer be a hindrance because there would no longer be a fear of being caught by police. It would basically be an open market to any person with money, children and teenagers included. That is why it’s important that we, as a nation, keep the laws set against drugs to help maintain a boundary for children and teenagers against buying, selling, and doing drugs.

Not only would drugs then be more available to kids if they were legalized, but it would also promote a setback for parents who are trying to discourage their kids from using drugs. Legalizing drugs would send a message of tolerance to the children and teenagers in the United States. They would retire on the belief that if the United States allows drugs to be used on a day-to-day basis, then how bad could they really be. When in reality, it would be the worst possible thing for the United States. According to Drug Watch International “The use of drugs is illegal because of their intoxicating effects on the brain, damaging impact on the body, adverse impact on behavior, and potential for abuse” (Drug Watch). If drugs were to be legalized, kids would then be able to argue that since drugs are no longer illegal, then it’s okay for them to do drugs. However, what kids would fail to understand, is that drugs can have serious and long term effects on the people who do them. John P. Walters, of The Wall Street Journal, emphasizes this point by saying that “We know that the disease [of addiction] begins with the use of addictive drugs and that those drugs change the brain—they create craving, impair judgment and lead to withdrawal or a feeling of illness in absence of the drug” (Walters 2). Any person who tries drug, even if it’s only one time, can then become vulnerable to addiction, which is perhaps one of the worst things that a person could have to go through. It has been shown time and time again that addiction is never an easy thing to beat, especially when a person is in denial of being an addict.

Drug abuse not only constitutes harm to the person doing drugs, but also to the people around them. According to John P. Walters, “Roughly 80% of child abuse and neglect cases are tied to the use and abuse of drugs” (Walters 2). Walters also states that abusing drugs can affect a person “much worse by impairing judgment, weakening impulse control and at some levels of pathology, with some drugs, causing paranoia and psychosis” (Walters 2). It’s hard for a person to do the right thing and think for themselves when their brain is distorted from using drugs. Drug Watch International states that “Many drug users commit murder, child and spouse abuse, rape, property damage, assault, and other violent crimes under the influence of drugs” (Drug Watch). The potential for people committing crimes under the influence of drugs can lead to far more disastrous results. A lot of times people who are under the influence of drugs don’t even remember what they did or how an event happened. The worst part is that a lot of times children are witnesses to these crimes and the behavior of their parents under the influence of drugs. Children are unwillingly chosen to suffer for the mistakes of their parents by sometimes having to move into a foster home because their parents are

incapable of taking care of the children by themselves. It's important that as a society we don't allow our children to be influenced negatively by the use of drugs.

In Peter Katel's article "War On Drugs" people who believe that drugs should be legalized say that "Those who advocate decriminalizing drugs argue that the urge to take mind-altering substances lies deep in the human psyche. Attempts to eradicate drug use are doomed and represent an impractical impulse to try to control natural behavior, say supporters of legalization" (Katel 6). In other words, supporters of legalization are trying to say that the desire to do drugs is somehow embedded into us, which is entirely untrue. Not every person in the world has had a desire to do drugs. Yes, there are some people who want to try drugs, but those people do not constitute everyone. By saying this, they are already accepting defeat and rendering disbelief in the stronghold of people against drugs. If people are already accepting defeat in the use of illegal drugs, how can we expect to make any changes for the better of society.

As a society we have to be able to work together to prevent children and teenagers from doing drugs. In Peter Katel's article "War on Drugs" Allan Clear states that "Our approach now is that we make it as dangerous as possible to use drugs" (Katel 6). The legalization of drugs would destroy any possibility we have of making the drug abuse situation better. We can't just tell children and teenagers not to do drugs, we also have to inform them that the path to drugs is a dangerous one and that the long term effects could be harmful, if not deadly. I believe that John P. Walters makes an important statement by saying that "Drug abuse makes human life solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (a special version of Hobbes's hell in our own families. In the deepest sense, this is why failure is not an option" (Walters 3). As a society, we should never give up. We should continue to educate children, teenagers, and even adults about the pain, suffering, and loss of life that comes with using drugs. John P. Walters also says that "we can make progress faster when more of us learn that drug use and addiction can not be an expression of individual liberty in a free society" (Walters 3). Legalizing drugs will in no way help us to better the drug abuse problem that surrounds our nation. If anything, it will only extend the problem to a further unreachable solution. Which is why it's important that we realize that drugs should not be the thing that define us as a nation. We have to work hard and be strong enough to make a decision not to let drugs become our downfall as a society.

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APPENDIX E
CHILDHOOD NARRATIVES AND RESEARCHER'S RE-POSITIONING OF
TEXTS

Note: Lisa's Narrative and Re-positioning of Text is Located in CHAPTER IV-Findings.

Appendix E

Childhood Narratives and Researcher's Re-positioning of Texts

Note: Lisa's narrative and re-positioning of text is located in Ch. IV-Findings.

Childhood narrative

First Generation

Lisa's narrative:

One of the things i can recall from my childhood is the fear of beeing rejected.I lived in Minnesotta for few years and went to school there as well for some of my elementry years. It was hard for me trying to blend in and be like everyone else, because i was the only mexican there. The students would see me different due to my skin color and my eyes were not color like them. my hair wasnt as shiny and light as their beautiful blond shades.i felt the discrimination with the same teachers and their was a poing in my life when i no longer wanted to go to school.We later moved back to Mexico where i though things woud change but to my luck it didnt.I didnt perfectly speak spanish due to the many years living in the U.S ; i had to be moved from the third level grade i was into a first grade class where they had to teach me how to speak spanish from the beginigh. Student would make fun of me and say i was dump because i was mexican and didnt even know spanish. i started to feel like i didnt belong any where and i couldnt blend in with my own people.That same year with hard effort i learned all i could and starated speaking more spanish ,i didnt really cared if i forgot how to speak inglish as long as they would accept me. I stayed for the next year of fourth grade in which i had made new friends, and met more family i didnt know i had. As i grew older i mature and i learn that there are many cultures and that i shouldnt feel bad instead i should be thankfull that i could learn from past experience and appreciate life more. I learn to interact with diffrent people, kids and adults due to the diffrent changes i went through.I have been to sixteen different school and i have made friends and known the differnt personalities there is and i shouldnt just stick to one kinda of person to be their friend but be friends with varieties of people.

Katia's narrative:

Childhood Experience

"Thank you mommy," was the first words that came out of my mouth when my mother gave me the doll during my birthday party. Even though I was only seven years old, I remember that day like if it was yesterday. My family has always been a poor family. We always struggle financially, but we always manage to keep a smile on our faces. We love each other and that is all that matters. My mother worked hard to save up to have that party for me. The whole day of my party I had a huge smile on my face. I realized that my smile brightened up her

day as well. When I was seven I didn't know how important money was, but now that I am older I understand. I am very grateful for my parents. That experience made me realize the importance of family and always staying together.

Alberto's narrative:

The New World

The wind blowing on the bus's window woke me up from my long nap. As I opened my eyes I was amazed by all the tall buildings that surrounded us. My mom, seeing how astonished I was, whispered to me, "es el centro de San Antonio." This was it, my sister, my mother, and I had finally arrived in the United States. While my mom was calling for a taxi, my sister and I went sightseeing some of the places around. The one that caught our attention immediately was El Paseo del Rio. We wondered how cool it must be to swim in there, and then just eat at one of the restaurants around it. Our exploration was cut short after we had to run away from a dirty looking man seating in the corner of a building who started yelling at us. When we got back with my mom, she told us that the taxi was here. It was time to go to my grandma's house and meet up with family and our dad. As we arrived at my grandma's house, we were welcomed by familiar faces. The first thing I noticed when we got inside the house was that Don Francisco was on. It was nice seeing him on TV, made me feel like this new place might not be much different than Mexico. By the time that we finished unpacking, Don Francisco was over and the news had started. Everyone got ready for bed, except me, I was too exited to go to bed. So I started flipping channels on the TV, until I got to the cartoons. I noticed that my favorite show, Pokemon, was on so I decided to watch it. It was going all good, but once the characters started to talk, I felt like someone had punched the air out of me. I did not understand a single word that came out of their mouth. Exited no more, I cried myself to sleep that night. The next morning, I was introduced to North Star Mall. I was overwhelmed by all the stores, especially the candy store. Who knew such a wonderful place really existed. After leaving the candy store, my dad took my sister and me shopping for some clothes. There were so many different stores to shop at. We eventually got to a store that sold clothes with cartoon characters. I was happy at the variety that they had. There were so many options that I couldn't decide what to get. One thing was sure, no Pokémon clothes for a while. When we got back to my grandma's house, we noticed that our favorite cousins had arrived from Mexico while we were away. Who needs dumb old Pikachu, when someone my age is around to play with. The next couple of days, I took my cousin to the candy store, and since he didn't know English either, we played outside instead of watching cartoons. Maybe this place could become my home away from home.

Second Generation

Javier's narrative

A childhood experience that I hold strong to myself is learning how to speak english. The First two years of school I remember struggling a lot. My First language was spanish because my family is hispanic. Here in the United States my mom had to learn quick about learning the native language. She always push me to master english. I spent many gruelling months practicing how to speak and write english. Suprisingly I learned english not by other teachers in school, but instead Television was my alley in the learning process. When ever I watched cartoons or anything on T.V. I remember absorbing everything.

Leonardo's narrative

Family has been an important part in my life. I grew up in a two-bedroom house. That may not seem like too big of a deal for most, but I am the youngest of three siblings. We (my father, mother and two siblings) have improved our lives through personal strife and with each other's support. College is not a word that is foreign in my family. My sister went to college. My older brother recently graduated college. Now, it's my turn. Since electricity has been around, we as a people have tried to exert the most from electricity. From the microprocessor to the solar wind panel, there are new advancements made every time I open a newspaper. After high school I will pursue my goal in becoming an Electrical Engineer. To accomplish this goal I need to continue my education in a university or college. I plan to strive for my goal until I reach it. I may need to set aside some time everyday with classmates or teachers to understand my tasks better. I've been told that my determination is one of my greatest strengths, as well as my mathematical skills. My leadership, and teamwork abilities have also been mentioned in the same sentence. Overcoming obstacles like making difficult choices, and managing time have been distractions to achieving my goals, but with family like mine I have been able to overcome them. In my life there hasn't been anyone that has impacted me as much as my father. It has taken me seventeen years to realize the enormous influence my father has been in my life. He has impacted me by seeming to always know all the right answers. He has always supported our family in every possible way; financially, emotionally, and always with extreme attention to detail. His process of thought has forced me to think for myself and not just go along with the "in" crowd. He is my best friend, and someone that's always pushed me to strive for the best. Growing up with such a strong role model, I have embraced his characteristics. I feel that it is my duty to take care of him as he has taken care of us through the years. He has improved my life with his love and care, and now I know that wherever I may go I will have his presence inside of me, and his love and encouragement with me. My determination can only take me so far, before the truth of life catches up. I am confident that I can succeed the obstacles faced by high school graduates. With the help from this scholarship, the greatest obstacle (money) can be overcome.

Rosa's narrative:

Despite the fact that, this country is no longer openly discriminating legally, it was not easy for me growing up as a Mexican American female. Throughout my childhood I experienced discrimination from classmates at school. I was teased about the color of my skin and the origin of my family. Both of my parents were born in Mexico and their culture is extremely different than American culture. This difference set me apart from most kids surrounding me. They would call me mean names such as wetback, nigger, and beaner. The majority of the girls in my class were medium-skinned color and I was 1 of the 3 dark-skinned girls. Many times the medium-skinned colored girls refused to play with me because they felt superior to me. The funny thing is that white children were not the ones discriminating against me, it was kids with my same family background. Those girls had brown colored skin but since it was lighter than mine they felt this justified their behavior.

Third Generation

Marina's narrative

One of the most relevant experiences of my childhood took place during my middle school years. It was definitely one of those things where, when you're younger, you sometimes think that the experience will never pass and that you'll be stuck in that place forever. Honestly, back then I would have probably considered the experience to be more negative than positive. However, now that I'm older I appreciate the experience more and from it I was able to learn from my mistakes. The experience helped paved the way for me to become the person I am today. During my middle school years, I guess you could say I was somewhat of a loser. I really feel like that is the most honest way I can put it. I look back on it now and I really can't believe the way I acted. I tried so hard to fit in with this certain group of kids. I lied. I cussed. I turned myself into this person who I really wasn't. It was never ending. The sad part is I actually thought I was cool. I see these little girls now trying to act older than they really are and I see how silly they look. And I'm pretty sure I must have looked the same way. It's embarrassing to think that's how I must have been. I thought by acting a certain way and doing the things the other kids wanted me to do, it would make them like me. It didn't really. If anything, it just made things worse. I never knew who my real friends were. I also knew there were many times when other girls would make fun of me behind my back. I went through my entire middle school like this. I was miserable. I was always scared of being who I really was because I didn't want the other kids to make fun of me. It wasn't until around my second year of high school that I realized how naïve and stupid I was being. I realized, for the first time, that you don't have always have to prove yourself to other people just to get them to like you. The experience taught me a lot. Being only around eleven or twelve when I entered middle school, I wasn't exactly sure of the kind of person I wanted to be. Now that I'm older, I have more of a clear vision of the kind of person I hope to be. I feel like without the experience that I went through during my childhood years, I would never have been able to

become the person I am today. Sure, I was humiliated and I looked incredibly dumb and said a lot of things I shouldn't have, but without having gone through all those things, I would have never been able to see the kind of person I want to be and also the kind of person I never want to be again. Because of that experience, I now have more compassion and admiration for people who are completely themselves because I know it takes a lot courage for people to be who they really are and not worry about what other people will think. I really feel that I needed to struggle through those years, because otherwise there is a good chance that I might have stumbled during my high school years and done things that were much worse. Of course, I still struggle sometimes with that fear of what people might think of me, but because of my childhood experience, I much more stable when it comes to making my own decisions and thinking for myself.

Researcher's Deconstruction of Narratives

Katia's narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

Childhood Experience
 "Thank you mommy,"
 was the
 first words
 that came out
 of my mouth
 when my mother
 gave me
 the doll
 during
 my birthday party.
 Even though
 I was only seven years
 old,
 I remember
 that day
 like if it was yesterday.
 My family
 has always been
 a poor family.
 We always
 struggle financially,
 but we
 always manage
 to keep a smile
 on our faces.

We love
 each other
 and that is all that
 matters.
 My mother
 worked hard
 to save up
 to have that party
 for me.
 The whole day
 of my party
 I had
 a huge smile
 on my face.
 I realized
 that my smile
 brightened up
 her day as well.
 When I was seven
 I didn't know
 how important
 money was,
 but now that
 I am older
 I understand.
 I am

very grateful
for my parents.
That experience
made me
realize

the importance of family
and always
staying together.

**Alberto's narrative: The Researcher's
Reading and Re-positioning of Text**

The New World
The wind
blowing
on the
bus's window
woke me up
from my
long nap.
As I opened
my eyes
I was amazed
by all
the tall buildings
that surrounded us.
My mom,
seeing how
astonished
I was,
whispered to me,
"es el centro
de San Antonio."
This was it,
my sister,
my mother,
and I
had finally
arrived
in the United States.
While
my mom
was calling
for a taxi,
my sister
and I went
sightseeing
some
of the places around.
The one
that caught
our
attention

immediately
was
El Paseo del Rio.
We wondered
how cool
it must be
to swim in there,
and then
just eat
at one
of the restaurants
around it.
Our exploration
was cut
short after
we had to
run away
from a
dirty looking man
seating
in the corner
of a building
who started
yelling at us.
When we got back
with
my mom,
she told us
that the taxi
was here.
It was time
to go
to my
grandma's house
and meet up
with family
and our dad.
As we
arrived
at my

grandma's house,
 we were welcomed
 by familiar faces.
 The first thing
 I noticed
 when
 we got inside
 the house
 was that Don Francisco
 was on.
 It was nice
 seeing him
 on TV,
 made me
 feel like this
 new place
 might not be much
 different than Mexico.
 By the time
 that we finished
 unpacking,
 Don Francisco was
 over
 and the news
 had started.
 Everyone
 got ready
 for bed,
 except me,
 I was
 too exited
 to go to bed.
 So I started
 flipping channels
 on the TV,
 until I got
 to the cartoons.
 I noticed that my
 favorite show,
 Pokemon,
 was on so
 I
 decided to
 watch it.

It was going
 all good,
 but once
 the characters
 started to
 talk,
 I felt
 like someone
 had punched
 the air
 out of me.
 I did not understand
 a single word
 that came out
 of their mouth.
 Exited
 no more,
 I cried
 myself to sleep
 that night.
 The next morning,
 I was introduced
 to North Star Mall.
 I was
 overwhelmed
 by all the stores,
 especially
 the candy store.
 Who knew
 such a wonderful
 place really existed.
 After leaving
 the candy store,
 my dad took
 my sister
 and me
 shopping
 for some clothes.
 There were
 so many different
 stores to shop at.
 We eventually
 got to a store
 that sold

clothes
with cartoon characters.
I was happy
at the variety
that they had.
There were so many
options that
I couldn't decide
what to get.
One thing was sure,
no Pokémon
clothes
for a while.
When we got back
to my
grandma's house,
we noticed
that our favorite cousins
had arrived
from Mexico
while we were away.
Who needs dumb
old Pikachu,
when someone
my age
is around
to play with.
The next couple
of days,
I took
my cousin
to the candy store,
and since
he didn't know
English either,
we played
outside
instead
of watching
cartoons.
Maybe this place
could become
my home away from
home.

Javier' narrative:The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

A childhood experience
that I hold strong
to myself is
learning how to speak
english.
The First two years of school
I remember
struggling a lot.
My First language was
spanish
because my family is
hispanic.
Here in the United States
my mom had to learn quick
about learning
the native language.
She always push me
to master english.
I spent many grueling months
practicing how to speak
and write english.
Suprisingly
I learned English
not by other teachers
in school, but instead
Television
was my ally
in the learning process.
When ever
I watched cartoons
or anything on T.V.
I remember absorbing
everything.

Leonardo's narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

Family
 has been
 an important
 part in my life.
 I grew up
 in a two-bedroom
 house.
 That may not seem
 like too big of a deal
 for most,
 but I am the youngest
 of three siblings.
 We
 (my father, mother and
 two siblings)
 have improved
 our lives
 through personal strife
 and with each other's
 support.
 College is not a word
 that is foreign
 in my family.
 My sister
 went to
 college.
 My older brother
 recently graduated
 college.
 Now, it's my turn.
 Since electricity
 has been around,
 we
 as a people
 have tried
 to exert
 the most
 from electricity.
 From the microprocessor
 to the solar wind panel,
 there are new

advancements made
 every time
 I open a newspaper.
 After high school
 I will pursue
 my goal
 in becoming
 an Electrical Engineer.
 To accomplish
 this goal
 I need to continue
 my education
 in a university or college.
 I plan to strive
 for my goal
 until I reach it.
 I may need to set aside
 some time
 everyday
 with classmates
 or teachers
 to understand
 my tasks better.
 I've been told
 that my determination
 is one of my
 greatest strengths,
 as well
 as my mathematical
 skills.
 My leadership,
 and teamwork abilities
 have also been
 mentioned
 in the same sentence.
 Overcoming obstacles
 like making difficult
 choices,
 and managing time
 have been
 distractions

to achieving
 my goals,
 but with family
 like mine
 I have been
 able to overcome them.
 In my life
 there hasn't been
 anyone
 that has impacted
 me
 as much as
 my father.
 It has taken me
 seventeen years
 to realize
 the enormous influence
 my father
 has been
 in my life.
 He has impacted
 me by seeming
 to always know
 all the right answers.
 He has always
 supported
 our family
 in every
 possible way;
 financially,
 emotionally,
 and always with
 extreme attention
 to detail.
 His process
 of thought has
 forced me
 to think
 for myself
 and not just go
 along with the
 "in" crowd.
 He is my
 best friend,

and someone
 that's always pushed
 me to strive
 for the best.
 Growing up
 with such
 a strong
 role model,
 I have embraced
 his characteristics.
 I feel
 that it is
 my duty to
 take care
 of him
 as he has
 taken care
 of us
 through
 the years.
 He has improved
 my life
 with his love and care,
 and now I know
 that wherever
 I may go
 I will
 have his
 presence
 inside of me,
 and his love
 and encouragement
 with me.
 My determination
 can only
 take me so far,
 before the truth
 of life
 catches up.
 I am confident
 that
 I can
 succeed
 the obstacles

faced by high school
graduates.
With the help
from this

scholarship,
the greatest obstacle
(money)
can be overcome.

Rosa's narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

Despite
the fact
that,
this country
is no
longer
openly discriminating
legally,
it was not easy
for me
growing up
as a Mexican American
female.
Throughout
my childhood
I experienced
discrimination
from classmates
at school.
I was teased
about the
color
of my skin
and the origin
of my
family.
Both of my
parents
were born in
Mexico
and their
culture is extremely
different
than American
culture.
This difference
set me
apart
from most kids
surrounding me.
They would

call me
mean names
such as
wetback,
nigger,
and beaner.
The majority
of the girls
in my class
were medium-skinned
color and
I was 1 of the 3
dark-skinned girls.
Many times
the medium-skinned
colored girls
refused to play
with me
because they
felt superior
to me.
The funny thing
is that white children
were not
the ones
discriminating
against me,
it was kids
with my same
family background.
Those girls
had
brown
colored skin
but since
it was lighter
than mine
they felt
this justified
their behavior.

Marina's narrative: The Researcher's Reading and Re-positioning of Text

One
of the
most
relevant
experiences
of my childhood
took place
during my
middle school years.
It was definitely
one of those things
where,
when you're younger,
you sometimes
think that the
experience will never
pass
and that
you'll be
stuck in that
place forever.
Honestly,
back then
I would have probably
Considered
the experienced
to be more
negative
than positive.
However,
now that
I'm older
I appreciate
the experience
more and from it
I was able
to learn
from my mistakes.
The experience
helped paved

the way
for me
to become
the person
I am today.
During my
middle school years,
I guess you could say
I was somewhat
of a loser.
I really feel like
that is
the most
honest way
I can
put it.
I look back
on it now
and I
really
can't believe
the way I acted.
I tried
so hard
to fit in
with this
certain group
of kids.
I lied.
I cussed.
I turned
myself into
this person
who
I really
wasn't.
It was never
ending.
The sad part
is I actually

thought
 I was cool.
 I see
 these little girls
 now trying
 to act
 older
 then
 they really are
 and I see
 how silly
 they look.
 And I'm pretty sure
 I must
 have looked
 the same way.
 It's embarrassing
 to think
 that's how
 I must have been.
 I thought
 by acting
 a certain way
 and doing
 the things
 the other kids
 wanted me
 to do,
 it would make them
 like me.
 It didn't really.
 If anything,
 it just made
 things worse.
 I never knew
 who my real
 friends were.
 I also knew
 there were
 many times
 when other
 girls would
 make fun
 of me

behind
 my back.
 I went through
 my entire middle
 school like this.
 I was miserable.
 I was always
 scared of being
 who I really
 was
 because I didn't
 want the
 other kids
 to make
 fun of me.
 It wasn't
 until
 around
 my second
 year of high
 school that
 I realized
 how naïve
 and stupid
 I was being.
 I realized,
 for the first time,
 that you don't
 have always
 have to prove
 yourself to
 other people
 just to get them
 to like you.
 The experience
 taught me
 a lot.
 Being only
 around eleven
 or twelve
 when I entered
 middle school,
 I wasn't exactly
 sure of the kind

of person
 I wanted to be.
 Now that I'm older,
 I have more
 of a clear vision
 of the kind
 of person
 I hope to be.
 I feel like without
 the experience that I
 went through
 during my childhood
 years,
 I would never
 have been able
 to become
 the person
 I am today.
 Sure, I was humiliated
 and I looked
 incredibly dumb
 and
 said a lot
 of things
 I shouldn't have,
 but without
 having gone
 through all
 those things,
 I would have
 never been able
 to see the kind
 of person
 I want
 to be
 and also
 the kind
 of person
 I never
 want
 to be again.
 Because of that
 experience,
 I now have

more compassion
 and admiration
 for people
 who are completely
 themselves
 because
 I know it takes
 a lot courage
 for people
 to be who
 they really
 are and not worry
 about what other
 people
 will think.
 I really feel
 that I needed
 to struggle through
 those years,
 because
 otherwise
 there is a good
 chance
 that I might
 have stumbled
 during
 my high school years
 and
 done things
 that were
 much worse.
 Of course,
 I still struggle
 sometimes
 with that
 fear of
 what people
 might think
 of me,
 but because
 of my childhood
 experience,
 I much more
 stable

when it comes
to making
my own
decisions
and thinking

for myself.

APPENDIX F

OVERALL WRITING EXPERIENCE AND SECOND INTERVIEW

RESPONSES

Appendix F

Overall Writing Experience and Second Interview Responses

Overall Writing Experience

First Generation

Lisa's Submission

(i dont exactly know what you mean with this question but i will answer it as i think and my best)

At the beginning of the first week of class i wasnt really informed of the different types of writing and how to write to make your paper,essay or any writing better.I found my weakness in writing but i learn how to fix that. I did a lot of reading in the class i was taking which helped me see and how i can also write and how i can change stuff around to make my writing clear direct and accurate without a lot of disorganization.I have learned more and i know that i will keep improving as i keep practicing how to write.

Katia's Submission

Overall Writing Experience

My overall writing experience at [at a college of the Southwest] was great. It helped me understand writing even more. Many of the styles we learned from high school were completely different from those in college. In high school we weren't enforced to use correct quotations in borrowed writing. In college, it is known as plagiarism and it is against the law. I also learned the different ways in citing work. My writing experience improved so much in just a short amount of time. It was a great experience.

Alberto's Submission

My overall writing experience was a good one. It was a good topic to write about. I hadn't touch the subject since elementary, so it was nice writing about old memories. Also not having to reach a certain amount of words was good. Being able to write just enough to get my point across was good for a change.

Second Generation

Javier's Submission

It was a good experience.

Leonardo's Submission

I'm starting to feel more comfortable writing essays.

Rosa's Submission

It was a good writing experience, the semester was a process in which as days passed, I learned more. I had a different view of what a research essay was, so I had a difficult time getting started on it. The professor and the staff at the library helped me get started on this essay. When it was time to write the narrative it was easier for me to get started on it since I had gained knowledge of the steps and strategies to writing an essay.

Third Generation

Marina's Submission

I really enjoyed the overall writing experience. I think it went really well and I was glad to be able to help.

Second Interview Responses

First Generation

Interviewer: Questions now about your overall writing experience? I noticed in your comments to me that it mentions that you were informed on different types of writing and how to write, how to read it, how to make your paper or essay or any writing better?

Lisa: Yeah

Interviewer: And I am glad to see that you found weaknesses in your writing and you learned how to fix them so I was glad to see that....so you learned to fix them by revising?

Lisa: Revising this website that our teacher gave us to....ummm, Diane Hacker website and she gave us how to take a test and it told us to take a test and it would tell us if it was wrong why it was wrong and if it was right why it was right.

Interviewer: This is just out of overall experience how was the difference between the writing that you did for your class and the writing that you spent in working for the research paper compared to this childhood experience?

Lisa: Ummm, the difference was is the essay you meant. That one was a lot of research, it took a lot of research and to be double checking a lot, revising, editing. I think I did like three drafts, where I got to the final.

Interviewer: And with the childhood experience?

Lisa: The childhood ummm, It was something just like an experience. It was a little more easier to write about cause it was about me and my *story* and it was about by myself, and umm, I still I tried to keep organized still.

Interviewer: You stayed organized

Lisa: That's right.

Interviewer: One of the things that I noticed and now we can talk about the overall you didn't spend that much time writing or revising your personal experience you wrote it out. On this childhood experience I thought it was interesting because you pointed something very unique in reference to the way that you were treated by the other students when you were here and then also by....the natives....the native Mexicanos.

Lisa: Yes.

Interviewer: And I thought that was very unique because you had time to explore that issue and it's something very sensitive and it's something very significant, very important to us because sometimes I do feel the same way when I've visited Mexico, and I've had some....comments....as well....like my Spanish isn't fast enough.

Lisa: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you find yourself and I think I asked you this but this is just as a recap, do you find yourself connecting more to personal experiences a little bit more than those topics that are given to you or would you rather prefer the in class topics like in Composition II that you'll probably be taking and will you feel better just getting topics at random or topics that are closer to you personally.

Lisa: Ummm, I learn a lot from the random ones too cause I like it cause I learn more (interviewer-comment of approval) then ummm, then I didn't know before, I get to do research and for myself I get to educate myself I guess in a way to see what's happening. For example, the Afghanistan war getting a lot of the information going on.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Lisa: And stuff like that I already know but when....when I have to write it. It kind of makes me realize, I think about, about it more.

Interviewer: Okay, And do you have any questions for me?

Lisa: No, not really.

Katia's Response

Interviewer: How did you feel after the program ended?

Katia: It improved my writing, It was a good experience overall. I have better study habits, and I am able to transfer the courses I took. I learned a lot of things, it helped me in many ways.

Interviewer: Were there any difficulties in the writing of an essay to the writing of a narrative?

Katia: There was no difficulty with the writing, it took time but I did it.

Alberto's Response

Interviewer: The other question that I have is pertaining to the overall experience that you sent me and that one in particular, I enjoyed reading it. Also, I enjoyed reading your overall childhood experience. Let me talk a little bit about that because I noticed a couple of things that were different how you structure your writing. I was just curious to know about it and how you set that structure in your *New Life* paper because you worked with an outline and it was easier to focus on that and I noticed that you concentrated a lot on the idea of what you had to know the people that you were going to encounter in college, the difference between people in High School, and the difference between people in College. You did structure it to follow a comparison and contrast method and when you wrote your description of the childhood experience, I thought it was really interesting because you started from the bus trip and then what I found unique is the two central ideas that I saw the first was of you coming to the United States and the second was Pokemon. I was curious about Pokemon because I wasn't sure what kind of connection you had with him. Did you know that cartoon from Mexico and did you see Pokemon everyday in the cartoons or was it just often?

Alberto: Every now and then, well, yeah, like Monday through Friday it was like a special.

Interviewer: Alright, so it was something you were used to...

Alberto: Yeah.

Interviewer: I was curious about that because Pokemon kept coming back, right after you were talking about your initial reaction to the city and then how you sort of felt at home and then the excitement which is normal. Right, the excitement of being in the city. It is something very different.

Alberto: Yeah.

Interviewer: I noticed that Pokemon became very central from then on....at the middle of the third paragraph and then he continued all the way through the end. And that's why I was curious because you saw him every single Monday through Friday.

Alberto: Yeah.

Interviewer: I just wanted to double check the pronunciation, that one is Pikachu in Spanish. What do you mean? You have mentioned Pikachu

Alberto: Yes.

Interviewer: But that's how Pokemon is pronounced in Spanish isn't it.

Alberto: Yeah.

Interviewer: I just wanted to double check. I am not that informed with many cartoons, but I know some of the characters, I just wanted to double check when you were writing your childhood experience and your overall feedback at the end, you mentioned that it was good to just get your point across. Do you feel that sometimes when you're writing an academic essay like the one that you wrote. Do you feel that you weren't able to get your point across when you had to write or you struggled with that type of essay.

Alberto: Oh...that professor expected me to elaborate more on the idea and that was the problem I had.

Interviewer: It's the elaboration. Talk to me about the section where you state "not having to reach a certain amount of words was good." Do you sometimes feel that when professors place a certain number of words does it restrain you? Does it restrict you from being able to write more and do you struggle a little bit with that requirement?

Alberto: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yes, because you want to state the point and not be as elaborate?

Alberto: Well, I like to elaborate a little, but then they want me to elaborate a lot more than I need to.

Interviewer: And one last question, have you ever felt that you have to place yourself in a different thinking pattern when you're writing something personal to when you're writing for your professor in college?

Alberto: Yes, cause like the childhood experience thing was coming like out of my heart and compared to the new life it was more of a research paper. We were thinking about it, dealing with the idea of it, so it was definitely easier to write the childhood experience.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to write that one compared to the other one, the academic essay?

Alberto: The *New Life* one was about I think we only had a week to do it and this one took me a whole month to do it...

Interviewer: The childhood narrative?

Alberto: Yes.

Interviewer: During that whole month were you just thinking about it?

Alberto: I remember having my third grade year book and I remember the first thing our teacher made us write was about a childhood experience. I remember having something that had to do with that story so I had to like look for that kind of thing kind of as a back-up since I couldn't remember much and yes, I found everything.

Interviewer: That's good. I'm glad to hear that you were able to relate to it. Do you have any other questions about the assignment?

Alberto: No.

Second Generation

Javier's Response

Interviewer: Did you have any difficulty with the writing assignments?

Javier: *My writing is straight to the point.*

Interviewer: Do you prefer to write research papers or personal response?

Javier: *No preference of one over the other type of writing assignment.*

Leonardo's Response

Interviewer: And the last question that I have with the writing you submitted. What was your overall experience with the writing compared to the writing that you did in your class, the writing that you've done with your essays compared to the personal narrative?

Leonardo: I guess for me it would probably just have to be I just I need to work at it more.

Interviewer: The personal or the essay?

Leonardo: Both I guess, what do you call it? Writing is not my subject so even though many people say finally it's getting better I still don't see it that way.

Interviewer: Okay.

Leonardo: I just need to keep pushing myself. It will be better where I feel comfortable with what I'm writing.

Interviewer: Did you find yourself struggling with the narrative at all or did it come easy to you?

Leonardo: No, it's kind of rough cause I mean. Like I said again that's not really my subject.

Interviewer: So you struggled with it a little bit.

Rosa's Response

Interviewer: What were some of the differences in the writing assignments between the research essay and the narrative?

Rosa: It was easier to write about the personal topics and I would prefer them.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to write the academic paper versus the narrative?

Rosa: It took one week

Interviewer: And the narrative?

Rosa: A few days, less time.

Interviewer: Did you struggle through either assignments?

Rosa: The introduction and the conclusion, I would struggle before, but now it is better.

Interviewer: Which of the two types of assignments do you prefer to write?

Rosa: The assignment of the narrative.

Third Generation**Marina's Response**

Interviewer: Did you find any difficulty when writing the childhood experience?

Marina: A little bit because you had to think back to when you were younger.

Interviewer: Did you have any difficulty with the writing of the essay?

Marina: No, not really.

Interviewer: Which of the two assignments would you prefer to write?

Marina: Research paper, I think I am kind of shy and I have a hard time talking about myself.

Interviewer: Why were you scared?

Marina: People may make fun of how I write.

VITA

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